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The Miscellaneous Plays of Edwin Booth

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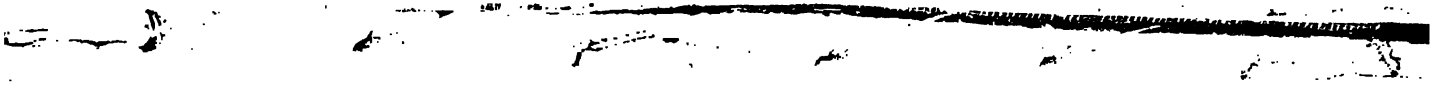
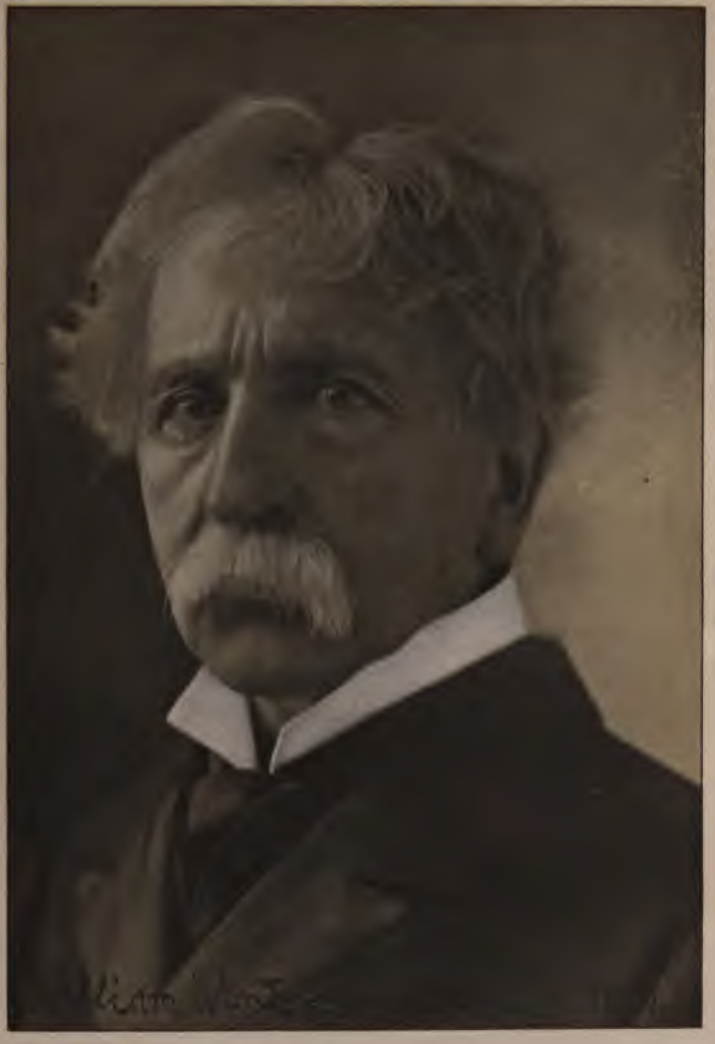
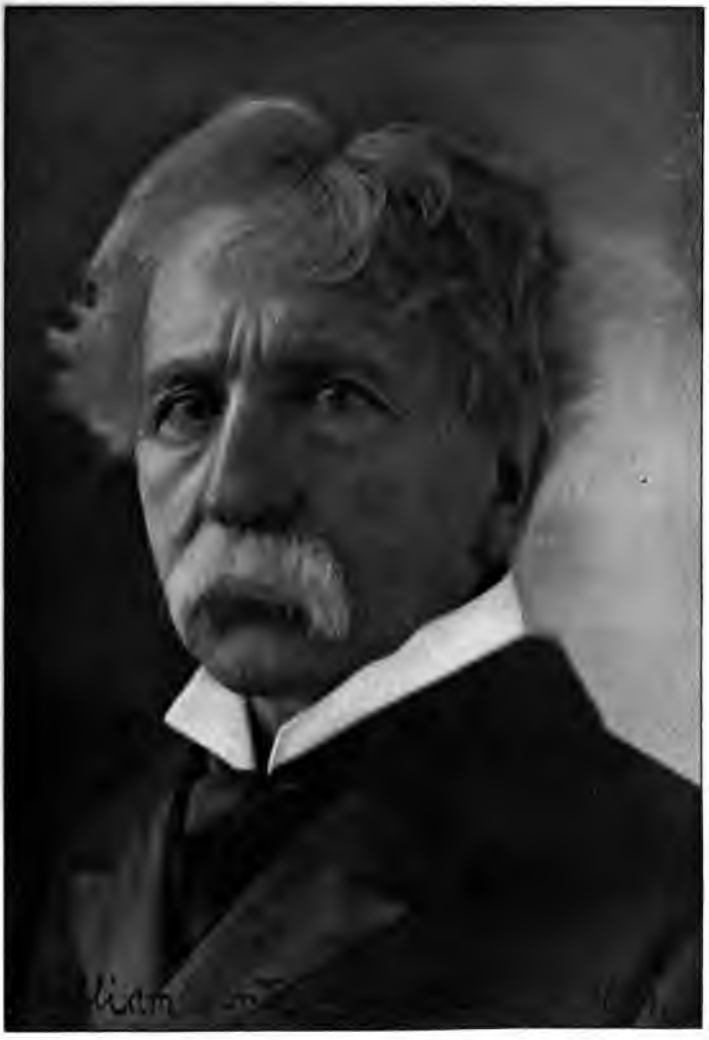






THE

MISCELLANEOUS PLAYS

OF

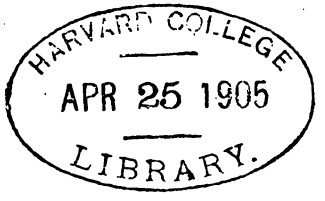
EDWIN BOOTH

Edited by

WILLIAM WINTER

VOLUME III

PHILADELPHIA
THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
1899



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VOL. III

Preface.

THIS volume contains the principal plays, aside from those of Shakespeare, that were included by Edwin Booth in his customary repertory,—namely, "Richelieu," "The Fool's Revenge," "Brutus," "Ruy Blas," and "Don Cæsar de Bazan." In addition to these, he occasionally presented "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," "The Iron Chest," "The Apostate," "The Lady of Lyons," and "The Stranger,"—impersonating Sir Giles Overreach, Sir Edward Mortimer, Pescara, Claude Melnotte, and the sad and cynical hermit husband of Mrs. Haller. He had, in his time, played scores of parts. Old records that I possess name him as the representative of Wilford, Hemeya, Titus, Gratiano, Cassio, Laertes, Edgar, Mr. Dombey, Richmond, Charles II., Dazzle, Frank Heartall, Captain Absolute, Charles Surface, Colonel Mannering, and Young Marlowe. The list might be largely augmented. Edwin Booth, essentially a tragedian, attained to greatness in the acting of tragedy, but he reached that eminence by the practical development and discipline of his faculties in the embodiment of many and widely diversified parts as well as by the power of his genius, the charm of his personality, and the force of his character. One of his early embodiments was that of Henry II., in a play on that king's life by Messrs. Hollister and Champlin, produced at New Orleans in 1859. This performance was not given elsewhere, and I never saw it, but the record of it is cordial with admiration, and Booth

mentioned the play to me with sympathy and approval. Another half-forgotten performance of his was that of Eugene de Morny, in a drama called "Love's Ordeal," by Edmund Falconer: this was given in Boston. Booth's comedy was not equal to his tragedy, but he liked to play comedy parts, and he often said that a tragic actor ought sometimes to act in comedy, for the sake of relief and for the maintenance of a flexible manner. He was very fond of "Richelieu," and in my time he has never had an equal in that part. The intellectual exaltation, the august loneliness, the inherent majesty, the deep tenderness, the subtle, lambent humour, the indomitable character, and the fiery and consuming passion of the old churchman were interblended by him in a figure of perfect symmetry and of overwhelming authoritative force. That impersonation alone would have made him eminent and famous. To think of him in only the respective leading characters that dominate the five plays in this volume—Richelieu, Bertuccio, Brutus, Ruy Blas, and Don Cæsar—is to perceive the image of an actor of great elemental power and of astonishing versatility; and such an actor, indeed, was Edwin Booth.

W. W.

May 17th, 1899.

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RICHELIEU

VOL. III

Preface.

✠

THE full title of this piece is "Richelieu; or, The Conspiracy." It was written in the fall of 1838, and it was first acted on March 7th, 1839. Macready—for whom, and under whose counsel it had been made—brought it out, at Covent Garden, London, of which theatre he was then the manager, and himself personated Richelieu. In Macready's "Reminiscences" there are several interesting allusions to this subject, notable as showing in what manner the drift of the play was changed by the author, under the actor's advice, and also as showing that the text was freely cut, in the process of adapting it to the practical uses of the stage. "When I developed the whole plan of alterations," says Macready, the author "was in ecstacy." This, evidently, was an instance in which the literary faculty was happily guided by an experienced and just dramatic instinct. In this drama, consequently, the story is told by direct action, out of which the language naturally flows,—tinged, it is true, with the romantic sentimentalism that thoroughly saturated Bulwer's thought and style,—and to which, for the most part, it is a spontaneous necessity. It appears to have been Macready's impression that Bulwer had drawn, under the name of Richelieu, a character entirely different from the historic original; but he records that

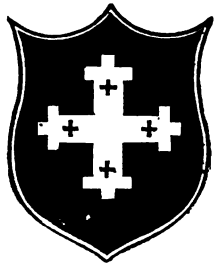
Bulwer at length satisfied him as to the justice of the portrayal, from the evidence of history. There is no doubt, however, that the poet has considerably — though neither unjustly nor inartistically — idealized the character of Richelieu. His own remarks upon it, in his essays upon "Self-Controul" and "Posthumous Reputation," in "Caxtoniana," illustrate this truth. "In Richelieu," he says, "there was no genuine self-controul; because he had made his whole self the puppet of certain fixed and tyrannical ideas." Yet the Richelieu of this play is iron in his domination of self and of circumstance. In the play, moreover, the cruelty of the Cardinal nowhere appears, while his craft and vanity are much softened. He is made, in fact, the ideal hero of a poetical work, and he should be regarded solely in this light. The text of the original has been cut and arranged in accordance with this idea, and with the plan of action pursued by Edwin Booth. This version differs from those used by Macready and Forrest, and it also differs from all others in print or in use. The purpose which has governed in the editorial work was the purpose to give all possible prominence to the poetical aspect of the character. As to particular modifications: the long monologue that begins Act Third has been shortened to a few carefully chosen lines; several minor scenes and several clusters of superfluous lines have been omitted; and the characters of the Governor and Gaoler of the Bastile have been excised. The year of the play is indicated by the reference, in Act Fifth, to the loss, by Charles I., of "a battle that decides one-half his realm." The earliest of the Parliamentary victories that could with propriety be so designated was the battle of Marston Moor, fought on July 2d, 1644. Bulwer, it must be assumed, intended to take a poetic license with history, since, while no

other battle than that is responsive to his allusion, both Richelieu and Louis XIII. were dead before that battle was fought, before any important battle had signalized the strife betwixt Charles I. and the Puritans, and before Cromwell had become known. Louis XIII., of France, reigned from 1610 to 1643. Richelieu died in 1642, aged 57. Cromwell, even at Marston Moor, was but second in command. Richelieu, it is probable, never heard of him. This drama was first acted in America, September 4th, 1839, at Wallack's National Theatre, in Leonard Street, New-York. Edwin Forrest was then the representative of the Cardinal.

"Vivet extento Proculeius aevo,
Notus in frates animi paterni."

W. W.

New-York, March 9th, 1878.



"The purest treasure mortal times afford
Is spotless reputation: that away,
Men are but gilded loam or painted clay.
A jewel in a ten-times barred-up chest
Is a bold spirit in a loyal breast.
Mine honour is my life; both grow in one:
Take honour from me and my life is done."—SHAKESPEARE.

"To him the church, the realm, their power consign;
Through him the rays of regal bounty shine;
Turned by his nod, the stream of honour flows:
His smile alone security bestows:
Still to new heights his restless wishes tower:
Claim leads to claim, and power advances power."
DR. JOHNSON.

"The brave man carves out his fortune, and every man is the son of his own works."—CERVANTES.

"A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er-informed the tenement of clay."—DRYDEN.

"Conceal not Time's misdeeds, but on my brow
Retrace his mark;
Let the retiring hair be silvery now,
That once was dark:
Eyes that reflected images too bright,
Let clouds o'ercast,
And from the tablet be abolished quite,
The cheerful past."—LANDOR.

"Old as I am, I know what passion is.
It is the summer's heat, sir, which in vain
We look for frost in."—SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

"Cardinal Richelieu's politics made France the terror of Europe."
ADDISON.

"He who ascends to mountain-tops shall find
The loftiest peaks most wrapped in clouds and snow;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind
Must look down on the hate of those below.
Though high above the sun of glory glow,
And far beneath the earth and ocean spread,
Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
Contending tempests on his naked head,
And thus reward the toils which to those summits led."
LORD BYRON.

Persons Represented.

✠

LOUIS XIII., KING OF FRANCE.

GASTON, DUKE OF ORLEANS, *brother to the King.*

CARDINAL RICHELIEU.

BARADAS, *the King's favourite.*

ADRIAN DE MAUPRAT, *an officer in the French Army.*

DE BERINGHEN, *a courtier.*

JOSEPH, *a Capuchin, confidant to Richelieu.*

HUGUET, *an officer and a spy in Richelieu's service.*

FRANÇOIS, *a Page to Richelieu.*

FIRST COURTIER.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD SECRETARIES OF STATE.

JULIE DE MORTEMAR, *an orphan, ward to Richelieu.*

MARION DE LORME, *a spy for Richelieu.*

COURTIERS, PAGES, CONSPIRATORS, OFFICERS, SOLDIERS, GENTLEMEN, AND ATTENDANTS.

Place and Time.

✠

SCENE.—*Paris and Ruelle* [*Reuil*], *in France.*

PERIOD.—*Middle of the Seventeenth Century.*

TIME OF ACTION.—*Four days.*

SCENES REQUIRED.—*First Act, two; Second Act, two; Third Act, one; Fourth Act, one; Fifth Act, one. The principal scene set for Act First is used again in Act Second.*

RICHELIEU.

Act First.

FIRST DAY.

Scene First. PARIS. A ROOM IN THE HOUSE OF MARION DE LORME. BARADAS AND ORLEANS AT TABLE R. MARION DE LORME CONVERSING WITH A COURTIER C. DE BERINGHEN, DE MAUPRAT, AND COURTIERS PLAYING AT DICE L. COURTIERS LOOKING ON.

Orl. [*Drinking.*

Here 's to our enterprize!

Bar. [*Glancing at Marion.*

Hush, sir!

Orl. [*Aside.*

Nay, count.
You may trust her; she doats on me; no house
So safe as Marion's.

Bar.

Still, we have a secret;
And oil and water—woman and a secret—
Are hostile properties.

Orl.

Well — Marion, see
How the play prospers yonder.

[*Marion goes to the table* L.

Bar. [*Producing a parchment.*

I have now
All the conditions drawn; it only needs
Our signatures.
Bouillon will join his army with the Spaniard.
March on to Paris: there, dethrone the king;
You will be regent; I, and ye, my lords
Form the new council. So much for the core
Of our great scheme.

Orl.

But Richelieu is an Argus;
One of his hundred eyes will light upon us,
And then—good-by to life.

Bar.

To gain the prize
We must destroy the Argus:—ay, my lord.
The scroll the core, but blood must fill the veins
Of our design: while this dispatched to Bouillon,
Richelieu dispatched to Heaven! The last my charge.
Meet here to-morrow night. *You*, sir, as first
In honour and in hope, meanwhile select
Some trusty knave to bear the scroll to Bouillon:
'Midst Richelieu's foes, *I 'll* find some desperate hand
To strike for vengeance, while we stride to power.

Orl.

So be it:—to-morrow, midnight.—Come, my lords.

[*Exeunt Orleans, and the courtiers in his train. Those at the other table rise, salute Orleans, as he passes out, and reseat themselves. Barradas goes to table* L, *and watches the game.*

De Ber.

Double the stakes.

De Maup.

Done.

De Ber.

Bravo; faith, it shames me
To bleed a purse already *in extremis.*

De Maup.

Nay, as you 've had the patient to yourself
So long, no other doctor should dispatch it.
[*De Mauprat throws and loses.*

Omnes.

Lost! Ha, ha — poor De Mauprat!

De Ber.

One throw more?

De Maup.

No; I am bankrupt:
There goes all except [*Pushing gold.*
My honour and my sword.

De Ber.

Ay, take the sword
To Cardinal Richelieu: — he gives gold for steel,
When worn by brave men.

De Maup.

[*Rises and goes to table* R.

Richelieu!

De Ber. [*To Baradas.*

At that name
He changes colour, bites his nether lip.
Ev'n in his brightest moments whisper "Richelieu,"
And you cloud all his sunshine.

Bar.

I have marked it,
And I will learn the wherefore.

De Maup.

The Egyptian
Dissolved her richest jewel in a draught:[1]
Would I could so melt time and all its treasures,
And drain it thus. [*Drinking.*

De Ber.

Come, gentlemen, what say ye;
A walk on the Parade?

Omnes.

Ay, come, De Mauprat.

De Maup.

Pardon me; we shall meet again, ere night-fall.

Bar.

I 'll stay and comfort Mauprat.

De Ber.

Comfort! — When
We gallant fellows have run out a friend,
There 's nothing left — except to run him through!
There 's the last act of friendship.

De Maup.

Let me keep
That favour in reserve; in all beside
Your most obedient servant.

[*Exeunt all but De Mauprat and Baradas.*

[N. B.—*The scene is sometimes changed, at this point, to facilitate the setting of the room in Richelieu's palace.*]

Bar.

You have lost—
Yet are not sad.

De Maup.

Sad!—Life and gold have wings,
And must fly one day; — open then, their cages,
And wish them merry.

Bar.

You 're a strange enigma;
Fiery in war and yet to glory lukewarm;
All mirth in action; in repose all gloom.

Fortune of late has severed us — and led
Me to the rank of courtier, count, and favourite,
You to the titles of the wildest gallant
And bravest knight in France: are you content?
No; — trust in me — some gloomy secret ——

De Maup.

Ay; —
A secret that doth haunt me, as of old,
Men were possessed of fiends: where'er I turn,
The grave yawns dark before me. — I *will* trust you:
Hating the Cardinal, and beguiled by Orleans,
You know I joined the Languedoc revolt —
Was captured — sent to the Bastile ——

Bar.

But shared
The general pardon, which the Duke of Orleans
Won for himself, and all in the revolt
Who but obeyed his orders.

De Maup.

Note the phrase:
"*Obeyed his orders.*" Well, when on my way
To join the duke in Languedoc, I (then
The down upon my lip — less man than boy),
Leading young valours, reckless as myself,
Seized on the town of Faviaux, and displaced
The royal banners for the rebel. Orleans,
Never too daring, when I reached the camp,
Blamed me for acting — mark — *without his orders.*
Upon this quibble, Richelieu razed my name
Out of the general pardon.

Bar.

Yet released you
From the Bastile ——

De Maup.

To call me to his presence
And thus address me: — "You have seized a town
Of France, without the orders of your leader;
And for this treason, but one sentence — Death."

Bar.

Death!

De Maup.

"I have pity on your youth and birth,
Nor wish to glut the headsman: join your troop,
Now on the march against the Spaniards; change
The traitor's scaffold for the soldier's grave:
Your memory stainless — they who shared your crime
Exiled or dead — your king shall never learn it."

Bar.

O tender pity — O most charming prospect!
Blown into atoms by a bomb, or drilled
Into a cullender by gunshot! — Well?

De Maup.

You have heard if I fought bravely. Death became
Desired, as Daphne by the eager Daygod.[2]
Like him I chased the nymph — to grasp the laurel!
I could not die!

Bar.

Poor fellow!

De Maup.

When the Cardinal
Reviewed the troops, his eyes met mine; he frowned,
Summoned me forth: "How 's this?" quoth he: "you have shunned
The sword — beware the axe! 't will fall one day!"
He left me thus; we were recalled to Paris,
And — you know all!

Bar.

And, knowing this, why halt you,
Spelled by the rattlesnake, while in the breasts
Of your firm friends beat hearts that vow the death
Of your grim tyrant?—wake: be one of us;
The time invites: the king detests the Cardinal,
Dares not disgrace, but groans to be delivered
Of that too great a subject: join your friends,
Free France, and save yourself.

De Maup.

Hush! Richelieu bears
A charmèd life: to all who have braved his power
One common end—the block!

Bar.

Nay, if he live,
The block your doom.

De Maup.

Better the victim, count,
Than the assassin: France requires a Richelieu,
But does not need a Mauprat. Truce to this:
All time one midnight, where my thoughts are spectres:
What to me fame?—what love?—

Bar.

Yet dost thou not love?

De Maup.

Love?—I am young——

Bar.

And Julie fair! [*Aside.*] It is so.
Upon the margin of the grave, his hand
Would pluck the rose that *I* would win and wear! [*Aloud.*
Thou lovest——

De Maup. [*Gaily.*

No more!
I love: Your breast holds both my secrets: never
Unbury either!—Come, while yet we may,

We 'll bask us in the noon of rosy life;
Lounge through the gardens, flaunt in the taverns,
Laugh, game, drink, feast: if so confined my days,
Faith, I 'll enclose the nights. Pshaw, not so grave;
I 'm a true Frenchman!—*Vive la bagatelle!*

[*Enter Huguet and guards* L.

Hug.

Messire De Mauprat,—I arrest you!—Follow
To the lord Cardinal.

De Maup.

You see, my friend,
I 'm out of my suspense; the tiger 's played
Long enough with his prey. Farewell! Hereafter
Say, when men name me, "Adrian De Mauprat
Lived without hope, and perished without fear!"

[*Exeunt De Mauprat, Huguet, and guards*, L.

Bar.

Farewell! I trust forever! I designed thee
For Richelieu's murderer—but as well his martyr!
In childhood you the stronger, and I cursed you;
In youth the fairer, and I cursed you still;
And now my rival: while the name of Julie
Hung on thy lips, I smiled—for then I saw,
In my mind's eye, the cold and grinning Death,
Hang o'er thy head the pall! Ambition, love,
Ye twin-born stars of daring destinies,
Sit in my house of life! By the king's aid
I will be Julie's husband, in despite
Of my lord Cardinal. By the king's aid
I will be minister of France, in spite
Of my lord Cardinal; and then; what then?
The king loves Julie; feeble prince! false master!
Then, by the aid of Bouillon, and the Spaniard,
I will dethrone the king; and all—ha!—ha!
All, in despite of my lord Cardinal.

[*Scene changes.*

Scene Second. { PARIS. A ROOM IN THE PALACE OF CARDINAL RICHELIEU.

[*Enter Richelieu and Joseph.*

Rich.

And so you think this new conspiracy
The craftiest trap yet laid for the old fox?
Fox! well, I like the nickname: what did Plutarch
Say of the Greek Lysander?

Jos.

I forget.

Rich.

That where the lion's skin fell short, he eked it
Out with the fox's! A great statesman, Joseph,
That same Lysander.

Jos.

Orleans heads the traitors.

Rich.

A very wooden head, then! Well?

Jos.

The favourite,
Count Baradas—

Rich.

A weed of hasty growth.
First gentleman of the chamber,—titles, lands,
And the king's ear. It cost me six long winters
To mount as high as in six little moons[4]
This painted lizard: but I hold the ladder,
And when I shake he falls: what more?

Jos.

A scheme
To make your orphan-ward an instrument
To aid your foes.
Your ward has charmed the king.

Rich.

Out on you!
Have I not, one by one, from such fair shoots,
Plucked the insidious ivy of his love?
And shall it creep around my blossoming tree,
Where innocent thoughts, like happy birds, make music
That spirits in heaven might hear?
The king is weak: whoever the king loves
Must rule the king; the lady loves another;
The other rules the lady: thus we 're balked
Of our own proper sway. The king must have
No goddess but the state:—the state! that 's Richelieu![b]

Jos.

This is not the worst: Louis, in all decorous,
And deeming you her least compliant guardian,
Would veil his suit by marriage with his minion,
Your prosperous foe, Count Baradas!

Rich.

Ha! ha!
I have another bride for Baradas!

Jos.

You, my lord?

Rich.

Ay—more faithful than the love
Of fickle woman; when the head lies lowest,
Clasping him fondest: sorrow never knew
So sure a soother; and her bed is stainless!

[*Enter François* C.

Fran.

Mademoiselle De Mortemar!

Rich.

Most opportune: admit her. [*Exit François* C.
In my closet
You 'll find a rosary, Joseph; ere you tell

Three hundred beads, I'll summon you. Stay, Joseph;
I did omit an Ave in my matins,—
A grievous fault; atone it for me, Joseph;
There is a scourge within; I am weak, you strong;
It were but charity to take my sin
On such broad shoulders.

Jos.

I! guilty of such criminal presumption
As to mistake myself for you! No, never!
Think it not! [*Aside.*] Troth, a pleasant invitation!
[*Exit Joseph* L. *Enter Julie De Mortemar* C.

Rich.

That's my sweet Julie!

Julie.

Are you gracious? [*Placing herself at his feet.*
May I say "Father?"

Rich.

Now and ever!

Julie.

Father!
A sweet word to an orphan.

Rich.

No, not orphan
While Richelieu lives: thy father loved me well;
My friend, ere I had flatterers: now I'm great,
In other phrase, I'm friendless: he died young
In years, not service, and bequeathed thee to me;
And thou shalt have a dowry, girl, to buy
Thy mate amid the mightiest. Drooping?—sighs?—
Art thou not happy at the court?

Julie.

Not often.

Rich. [*Aside.*

Can she love Baradas? Ah! at thy heart [*To Julie.*
There's what can smile and sigh, blush and grow pale,
All in a breath. Thou art admired—art young.
Does not his majesty commend thy beauty;
Ask thee to sing to him?

Julie.

He's very tiresome,
Our worthy king.

Rich.

Fie! Kings are never tiresome
Save to their ministers. What courtly gallants
Charm ladies most? De Sourdiac, Longueville, or
The favourite, Baradas?

Julie.

A smileless man—I
Fear and shun him.

Rich.

Yet he courts thee!

Julie.

Then—
He is more tiresome than his majesty.

Rich.

Right, girl; shun Baradas. Yet of these flowers
Of France, not one, in whose more honeyed breath
Thy heart hears summer whisper?

[*Enter Huguet* C.

Hug.

The Chevalier De Mauprat waits below.

Julie. [*Starting up, in alarm.*

De Mauprat!

Rich.

Hem!
He has been tiresome too! Anon.

[*Exit Huguet* C.

Julie.

What doth he?
I mean—I—does your eminence—that is—
Know you Messire de Mauprat?

Rich.

Well!—and you—
Has he addressed you often?

Julie.

Often! No—
Nine times: nay, ten; the last time by the lattice
Of the great staircase. [*In a melancholy tone.*
The court sees him rarely.

Rich.

A bold and forward roister!

Julie.

He? nay, modest,
Gentle and sad, methinks.

Rich.

Wears gold and azure?

Julie.

No, sable.

Rich.

So, you note his colours, Julie?
Shame on you, child, look loftier. By the mass,
I have business with this modest gentleman.

Julie.

You're angry with poor Julie: there's no cause.

Rich.

No cause! you hate my foes?

Julie.

I do.

Rich.

Hate Mauprat.

Julie.

Not Mauprat: no, not Adrian, father.

Rich.

Adrian? [*Julie moves toward* C.
Familiar! Go, child; no,—not *that* way; wait
In the tapestry chamber: I will join you,—go.

Julie. [*Going* R.

His brows are knit; I dare not call him father.
But I *must* speak. Your eminence—

Rich. [*Sternly.*

Well, girl!

Julie.

Nay,
Smile on me—one smile; there, now I 'm happy.
Do not rank Mauprat with your foes; he is not;
I know he *is* not; he loves France too well.

Rich.

Not rank De Mauprat with my foes?
So be it.
I 'll blot him from that list.

Julie.

That 's my own father.

[*Exit Julie* R. I. E.

Rich. [*Ringing bell on table.*

Huguet!

[*Enter Huguet* C.

De Mauprat struggled not, nor murmured?

Hug.

No: proud and passive.

Rich.

Bid him enter. Hold:
Look that he hide no weapon. Humph; despair
Makes victims sometimes victors. When he has entered,
Glide round unseen; place thyself yonder; watch him;
If he show violence—(let me see thy carbine:
[*Takes, examines, and returns Huguet's carbine.*
So; a good weapon); if he play the lion,
Why—the dog's death.

Hug.

I never miss my mark.

[*Exit Huguet* C. *Richelieu slowly arranges papers before him. Enter De Mauprat* C., *preceded by Huguet, who retires* R. *and conceals himself.*

Rich.

Approach, sir. Can you call to mind the hour,
Now three years since, when in this room, methinks,
Your presence honoured me?

De Maup.

It is, my lord,
One of my most——

Rich. [*Dryly.*

Delightful recollections.[6]

De Maup. [*Aside.*

St. Denis! doth he make a jest of axe and headsman?

Rich. [*Sternly.*

I did then accord you
A mercy ill requited.
Messire de Mauprat,
Doomed to sure death, how have you since consumed
The time allotted you for serious thought
And solemn penance?

De Maup. [*Embarrassed.*

The time, my lord?

Rich.

Is not the question plain? I 'll answer for thee.
Thou hast sought nor priest nor shrine; no sackcloth chafed
Thy delicate flesh: the rosary and the death's head
Have not, with pious meditation, purged
Earth from the carnal gaze. What thou hast *not* done
Brief told; what done, a volume! Wild debauch,
Turbulent riot: for the morn the dice-box;
Noon claimed the duel, and the night the wassail:
These your most holy, pure preparatives
For death and judgment. Do I wrong you, sir?

De Maup.

I was not always thus: if changed my nature,
Blame that which changed my fate. Alas, my lord,
Were you accursed with that which you inflicted—
By bed and board dogged by one ghastly spectre,
The while within you youth beat high, and life
Grew lovelier from the neighbouring frown of death—
The heart no bud, nor fruit, save in those seeds
Most worthless, which spring up, bloom, bear, and wither
In the same hour—were this your fate, perchance,
You would have erred, like me!

Rich.

I might, like you,
Have been a brawler and a reveller; not,
Like you, a trickster and a thief.

De Maup. [*Advancing, threateningly.*

Lord Cardinal,
Unsay those words!

[*Huguet emerges and raises his carbine.*

Rich. [*Raises his hand.*

Not quite so quick, friend Huguet;
Messire de Mauprat is a patient man,
And he can wait.
You have outrun your fortune: [*To De Mauprat.*

I blame you not that you would be a beggar—
Each to his taste; but I do charge you, sir,
That, being beggared, you would coin false moneys
Out of that crucible, called debt: to live
On means not yours; be brave in silks and laces,
Gallant in steeds, splendid in banquets;—all
Not yours; ungiven, uninherited, unpaid for:
This is to be a trickster; and to filch
Men's art and labour, which to them is wealth,
Life, daily bread,—quitting all scores with—"Friend,
You 're troublesome!" Why this, forgive me,
Is what—when done with a less dainty grace—
Plain folks call "*Theft!*" You owe ten thousand pistoles,
Minus one crown, two liards!

De Maup. [*Aside.*

The old conjurer!

Rich.

This is scandalous,
Shaming your birth and blood. I tell you, sir,
That you must pay your debts.

De Maup.

With all my heart,
My lord: where shall I borrow, then, the money?

Rich. [*Aside, and smiling.*

A humourous dare-devil: the very man
To suit my purpose; ready, frank, and bold.
[*To De Mauprat, and rising.*
Adrian de Mauprat, men have called me cruel;
I am not; I am just. I found France rent asunder;
The rich men despots and the poor banditti;
Sloth in the mart and schism within the temple;
Brawls festering to rebellion; and weak laws
Rotting away with rust in antique sheaths.
I have re-created France; and from the ashes
Of the old feudal and decrepit carcass,
Civilization on her luminous wings

Soars, phœnix-like, to Jove! What was my art?
Genius, some say; some, fortune; witchcraft, some:
Not so; my art was justice! Force and fraud
Mis-name it cruelty: you shall confute them!
My champion you! You met me as your foe.
Depart my friend. You shall not die: France needs you.
You shall wipe off all stains; be rich, be honoured;
Be great: I ask, sir, in return, this hand,
[*De Mauprat kneels.*
To gift it with a bride, whose dower shall match,
Yet not exceed her beauty.

De Maup. [*Hesitating.*

I, my lord —
I have no wish to marry.

Rich.

Surely, sir,
To die were worse.

De Maup. [*Rises.*

Scarcely; the poorest coward
Must die; but knowingly to march to marriage —
My lord, it asks the courage of a lion!

Rich.

Traitor, thou triflest with me. I know all.
Thou hast dared to love my ward — my charge.

De Maup.

As rivers
May love the sunlight — basking in the beams,
And hurrying on.

Rich.

Thou hast told her of thy love?

De Maup.

My lord, if I had dared to love a maid,
Lowliest in France, I would not so have wronged her,
As bid her link rich life and virgin hope
With one, the deathman's gripe might, from her side,
Pluck at the nuptial altar.

Rich.

I believe thee:
Yet, since she knows not of thy love, renounce her;
Take life and fortune with another.— Silent?

De Maup.

Your fate has been one triumph: you know not
How blessed a thing it was in my dark hour
To nurse the one sweet thought you bid me banish.
Love hath no need of words; nor less within
That holiest temple, the heaven-builded soul,
Breathes the recorded vow. Base knight, false lover
Were he who bartered all that brightened grief
Or sanctified despair, for life and gold.
Revoke your mercy; I prefer the fate
I looked for.

Rich. [*To Huguet, sternly.*

Huguet, to the tapestry chamber
Conduct your prisoner.

[*To De Mauprat.*

You will there behold
The executioner:—your doom be private—

[*Crosses to* R.

And heaven have mercy on you!

De Maup.

When I 'm dead,
Tell her I loved her—

Rich. [*Hiding his face.*

Keep such follies, sir,
For fitter ears. Go.

De Maup.

Does he mock me?

[*Exeunt De Mauprat and Huguet* R. 1. E.

[*Richelieu laughs.*

Rich.

Joseph,
Come forth.

[*Enter Joseph* L. 1. E.

Methinks your cheek has lost its rubies, Joseph.
I fear you have been too lavish of the flesh;
The scourge is heavy.

Jos.

Pray you, change the subject.

Rich.

You good men are so modest! Well, to business.
Go instantly — deeds — notaries! — bid my stewards
Prepare my house by the Luzembourg — *my* house
No more! — a bridal present to my ward,
Who weds to-morrow.

Jos.

Weds? with whom?

Rich.

De Mauprat.

Jos.

A penniless husband.

Rich.

Bah! the mate for beauty
Should be a man and not a money-chest!
When her brave sire lay on his bed of death,
I vowed to be a father to his Julie;
And so he died — the smile upon his lips:
And when I spared the life of her young lover,
Methought I saw that smile again. Who else,
Look you, in all the court, who else so well,

Brave, or supplant the favourite; balk the king,
Baffle their schemes? I have tried him: he has honour
and courage.
Besides, he has taste, this Mauprat: when my play
Was acted—to dull tiers of lifeless gapers,
Who had no soul for poetry—I saw *him*
Applaud, in the proper places: trust me, Joseph,
He is a man of most uncommon promise!

Jos.

And yet your foe.

Rich.

Have I not foes enow?
Great men gain doubly when they make foes friends.
Remember my grand maxims: first employ
All methods to conciliate.[8]

Jos.

Failing these?

Rich. [*Fiercely.*

All means to crush! as with the opening and
The clenching of this little hand I will
Crush the small venom of these stinging courtiers.—
So, so, we 've baffled Baradas.

Jos.

And when
Check the conspiracy?

Rich.

Check? check? Full way to it.
Let it bud, ripen, flaunt i' the day, and burst
To fruit—the Dead Sea's fruit of ashes; ashes
Which I will scatter to the winds.
Go, Joseph;
When you return I have a feast for you;
The last great act of my great play: the verses,
Methinks, are fine.
Come, you shall hear the verses now. [*Seating himself.*

Jos. [*Aside.*

Worse than the scourge!
Strange that so great a statesman
Should be so bad a poet.

Rich.

What dost thou say?

Jos.

That it is strange so great a statesman should
Be so sublime a poet.[9]

Rich.

O you rogue, you rogue!
But come, the verses now.

Jos.

My lord,
The deeds, the notaries.

Rich.

True, I pity you!
But business first, then pleasure. [*Exit Joseph* C.

Rich. [*Reading.*

Ah, sublime!

[*Enter De Mauprat and Julie* R. I. E.

De Maup.

O, speak, my lord! I dare not think you mock me.
And yet—— [*They kneel before him.*

Rich.

This line must be considered.

Julie.

Are we not both your children?

Rich.

O, sir—you live!

[*Affecting now to see them for the first time.*

De Maup.

Why, no; methinks
Elysium is not life.

Julie.

He smiles! you smile,
My father: from my heart forever, now,
I 'll blot the name of orphan.

Rich.

Rise, my children—
For ye are mine, mine both; and in your sweet
And young delight, your love (life's first-born glory)
My own lost youth breathes musical.

De Maup.

I 'll seek
Temple and priest henceforward: were it but
To learn Heaven's choicest blessings.

Rich.

Thou shalt seek
Temple and priest right soon: the morrow's sun
Shall see across these barren thresholds pass
The fairest bride in Paris. Go, my children:
Even *I* loved once:[10] be lovers while ye may.

[*To De Mauprat.*

How is it with you, sir? You bear it bravely:
You know it asks the courage of a lion.

[*Exeunt De Mauprat and Julie.*

O, God-like power! woe, rapture, penury, wealth,
Marriage, and death, for one infirm old man
Through a great empire to dispense—withhold—
As the will whispers! And shall things, like motes
That live in my daylight; lackeys of court wages;
Dwarfed starvelings; manikins, upon whose shoulders
The burden of a province were a load,
More heavy than the globe on Atlas, cast
Lots for my robes and sceptre?—France, I love thee!
All earth shall never pluck thee from my heart!
My mistress, France; my wedded wife, sweet France;
Who shall proclaim divorce for thee and me!

CURTAIN.

Act Second.

SECOND DAY.

Scene First. { PARIS. AN APARTMENT IN DE MAUPRAT'S HOUSE.

[*Enter Baradas* L.

Bar.

Mauprat's new home: too splendid for a soldier!
But o'er his floors, the while I stalk, methinks
My shadow spreads gigantic to the gloom
The old, rude towers of the Bastile cast far
Along the smoothness of the jocund day.
Well, thou hast 'scaped the fierce caprice of Richelieu!
But art thou further from the headsman, fool?
Thy secret I have whispered to the king:
Thy marriage makes the king thy foe: thou stand'st
On the abyss—and in the pool below
I see a ghastly, headless phantom mirrored,—
Thy likeness, ere the marriage moon hath waned.
Meanwhile—meanwhile—ha, ha! if thou art wedded,
Thou art not wived!

[*Enter De Mauprat* R.

De Maup.

Was ever fate like mine?—
So blessed, and yet so wretched!

Bar.

Joy, De Mauprat!
Why, what a brow, man, for your wedding-day!

De Maup.

Jest not. Distraction!

Bar.

What! your wife a shrew
Already? Courage, man—the common lot.

De Maup.

O, that she were less lovely, or less loved!

Bar.

Riddles again!

De Maup.

You know what chanced between
The Cardinal and myself.

Bar.

This morning brought
Your letter: faith, a strange account. I laughed
And wept at once for gladness.

De Maup.

We were wed
At noon: the rite performed, came hither—scarce
Arrived, when——

Bar.

Well?——

De Maup.

Wide flew the doors, and lo!
Messire de Beringhen, and this epistle.

Bar.

'Tis the king's hand; the royal seal.

De Maup.

Read—read!

Bar. [*Reading.*

"Whereas Adrian de Mauprat, colonel and chevalier in our armies, being already guilty of high treason, by the seizure of our town of Faviaux, has presumed, without our knowledge, consent, or sanction, to connect himself by

marriage with Julie de Mortemar, a wealthy orphan, attached to the person of Her Majesty; we do hereby proclaim and declare the said marriage contrary to law. On penalty of death, Adrian de Mauprat will not communicate with the said Julie de Mortemar by word or letter, save in the presence of our faithful servant, the Sieur de Beringhen, and then with such respect and decorum as are due to a demoiselle attached to the Court of France: until such time as it may suit our royal pleasure to confer with the Holy Church on the formal annulment of the marriage, and with our Council on the punishment to be awarded to Messire de Mauprat, who is cautioned, for his own sake, to preserve silence as to our injunction, more especially to Mademoiselle de Mortemar. Given under our hand and seal, at the Louvre.

"LOUIS."

[*Gives back letter to De Mauprat.*

Amazement! Did not Richelieu say the king
Knew not your crime?

De Maup.

He said so.

Bar.

Poor de Mauprat!
See you the snare, the vengeance worse than death
Of which you are the victim?

De Maup.

Ha!
Snare? vengeance,
Worse than death? Be plainer.

Bar.

What so clear?
Richelieu has but two passions.

De Maup.

Richelieu!

Bar.

Yes.
Ambition and revenge: in you both blended.
First for ambition: Julie is his ward;
Innocent, docile, pliant to his will;
He placed her at the court; foresaw the rest:
The king loves Julie!

De Maup.

Merciful Heaven! The king!

Bar.

Such Cupids lend new plumes to Richelieu's wings:
But the court etiquette must give such Cupids
The veil of Hymen — Hymen but in name.
He looked abroad; found you his foe; thus served
Ambition — by the grandeur of his ward,
And vengeance — by dishonour to his foe.

De Maup.

Prove this.

Bar.

You have the proof — the royal letter;
Your strange exemption from the general pardon,
Known but to me and Richelieu: can you doubt
Your friend, to acquit your foe? The truth is glaring:
Richelieu alone could tell the princely lover
The tale which sells your life, — or buys your honour.

De Maup.

I see it all: mock pardon — hurried nuptials —
False bounty! — all! — the serpent of that smile:
O! it stings home!

Bar.

You shall crush his malice:
Our plans are sure; Orleans is at our head;
We meet to-night; join us and with us triumph.

De Maup.

To-night!—O heaven!—my marriage night!—Revenge
But the king? but Julie?

Bar.

The king? infirm in health, in mind more feeble,
Is but the plaything of a minister's will.
Were Richelieu dead, his power were mine; and Louis
Soon should forget his passion and your crime.
But whither now?

De Maup.

I know not; I scarce hear thee;
A little while for thought: anon I 'll join thee;
But now, all air seems tainted, and I loathe
The face of man!

[*Exit De Mauprat* L.

Bar.

Start from the chase, my prey!
But as thou speed'st, the hell-hounds of revenge
Pant in thy track and drag thee down.

[*Enter De Beringhen* R.

De Ber.

Chevalier,
Your cook's a miracle: what, my host gone?
Faith, count, my office is a post of danger:
A fiery fellow, Mauprat! touch and go,—
Match and saltpeter,—pr-r-r-r!

Bar.

You
Will be released ere long. The king resolves
To call the bride to court this day.

De Ber.

Poor Mauprat!
Yet, since you love the lady, why so careless
Of the king's suit?

Bar.

Because the lady's virtuous,
And the king timid: ere he win the suit
He 'll lose the crown; the bride will be a widow;
And I—the Richelieu of the Regent Orleans.

De Ber.

Is Louis still so chafed against the fox,
For snatching yon fair dainty from the lion?

Bar.

So chafed that Richelieu totters. Yes, the king,
Is half conspiring against the Cardinal.
Enough of this. I've found the man we wanted;
The man to head the hands that murder Richelieu;
The man whose name's the synonym for daring.

De Ber. [*Alarmed.*

He must mean me! No, count, I am, I own,
A valiant dog—but still—

Bar.

Whom can I mean
But Mauprat? Mark, to-night we meet at Marion's;
There shall we sign: thence send this scroll
To Bouillon. [*Showing a paper.*
You 're in that secret—one of our new council.

De Ber.

But to admit the Spaniard, France's foe,
Into the heart of France—dethrone the king—
It looks like treason, and I smell the headsman.

Bar.

O, sir, too late to falter: when we meet
We must arrange the separate, coarser scheme,
For Richelieu's death. Of this dispatch De Mauprat
Must nothing learn. He only bites at vengeance,
And he would start from treason. We must post him
Without the door at Marion's—as a sentry;
So, when his head is on the block, his tongue
Cannot betray our more august designs.

De Ber.

I 'll meet you, if the king can spare me. [*Aside.*] No!
I am too old a goose to play with foxes;
I 'll roost at home. Meanwhile, in the next room
There 's a delicious pâté; let 's discuss it.

Bar.

Pshaw! a man filled with sublime ambition
Has no time to discuss your pâtés.

De Ber.

Pshaw.
And a man filled with a sublime pâté,
Has no time to discuss ambition.—Gad,
I have the best of it!

[*Exit De Beringhen* R.

Bar.

All is made clear; Mauprat *must* murder Richelieu—
Die for that crime: I shall console his Julie.
This will reach Bouillon!—from the wrecks of France
I shall carve out—who knows—perchance a throne!
All in despite of my lord Cardinal.

[*Enter De Mauprat* L.

De Maup.

Speak! can it be?—Methought that from the terrace
I saw the carriage of the king—and Julie!
No! No! my frenzy peoples the void air
With its own phantom!

Bar.

Nay, too true.—Alas!
Was ever lightning swifter, or more blasting,
Than Richelieu's forkèd guile?

De Maup.

I 'll to the Louvre——

Bar.

And lose all hope! The Louvre!—the sure gate
To the Bastile!

De Maup.

The king.

Bar.

Is but the wax,
Which Richelieu stamps: break the malignant seal,
And I will raze the print. Come, man, take heart!
Her virtue well could brave a sterner trial
Than a few hours of cold, imperious courtship.
Were Richelieu dust — no danger!

De Maup.

Ghastly vengeance!
To thee and thine august and solemn sister,
The unrelenting death, I dedicate
The blood of Armand Richelieu! When dishonour
Reaches our hearths, law dies and murder takes
The angel shape of justice!

Bar.

Bravely said!
At midnight, Marion's! — Nay, I cannot leave thee
To thoughts that ——

De Maup.

Speak not to me! — I am yours!
But speak not! There 's a voice within my soul,
Whose cry could drown the thunder. O, if men
Will play dark sorcery with the heart of man,
Let them, who raise the spell, beware the fiend!

[*Exeunt* L. *Scene changes.*

Scene Second. PARIS. A ROOM IN THE PALACE OF CARDINAL RICHELIEU. THE SAME AS IN ACT FIRST. FRANÇOIS DISCOVERED AT TABLE L. U. E.

[*Enter Richelieu and Joseph.*

Jos.

Yes; — Huguet, taking his accustomed round,
Disguised as some plain burgher, heard these rufflers
Quoting your name — he listened: "Pshaw," said one,

"We are to seize the Cardinal in his palace
To-morrow!"—"How?" the other asked;—"You'll hear
The whole design to-night: the Duke of Orleans
And Baradas have got the map of action
At their fingers' end." "So be it," quoth the other,
"I will be there,—Marion de Lorme's—at midnight:"

Rich.

I have them, man, I have them!

Jos.

So they say
Of you, my lord:—believe me, that their plans
Are mightier than you deem: you must employ
Means no less vast to meet them!

Rich.

Bah! in policy
We foil gigantic dangers, not by giants,
But dwarfs: the statues of our stately fortune
Are sculptured by the chisel—not the axe.[11]
Ah! were I younger—by the knightly heart
That beats beneath these priestly robes,[12] I would
Have pastime with these cut-throats! Yea, as when,
Lured to the ambush of the expecting foe,
I clove my pathway through the plumèd sea!
Reach me yon falchion, François—not that bauble
For carpet warriors—yonder—such a blade
As old Charles Martel might have wielded, when
He drove the Saracen from France.

[*François brings to Richelieu a long two-handed sword.*

With this
I, at Rochelle, did hand to hand engage
The stalwart Englisher:[13] no mongrels, boy,
Those island mastiffs. Mark the notch, a deep one,
His casque made here. I shore him to the waist!

A toy—a feather, then!

[*Tries to wield it, but sinks, overcome, into chair.*

You see, a child could
Slay Richelieu now.

Fran.

But now, at your command
Are other weapons, good my lord.

Rich. [*Lifting a pen.*

True, this!
Beneath the rule of men entirely great
The pen is mightier than the sword. Behold
The arch enchanter's wand: itself a nothing;
But taking sorcery from the master hand—
To paralyze the Cæsars, and to strike
The loud earth breathless! Take away the sword—
States can be saved without it!

[*François takes the sword back to its place. Clock strikes.*

'T is the hour—
Retire, sir.

[*Exit François* L. *A knock. Joseph opens secret door. Enter Marion de Lorme, through secret door.*

Jos. [*Amazed.*

Marion de Lorme!

Rich.

Hist! Joseph,
Keep guard. [*Joseph closes door and retires* C.
My faithful Marion!

Marion.

Good, my lord,
They meet to night in my poor house: the Duke
Of Orleans heads them.

Rich.

Yes; go on.

Marion.

His highness
Much questioned if I knew some brave, discreet,
And vigilant man, whose tongue could keep a secret,
And who had those twin qualities for service,
The love of gold, the hate of Richelieu.

Rich.

You——

Marion.

Made answer, "Yes; my brother; bold and trusty;
Whose faith my faith could pledge:" the duke then bade me
Have him equipped and armed, well mounted, ready
This night to part for Italy.

Rich.

Ah!—
Has Bouillon too turned traitor?—So methought.
What part of Italy?

Marion.

The Piedmont frontier,
Where Bouillon lies encamped.

Rich. [*Aside.*

Now there is danger!
Great danger! If he tamper with the Spaniard,
And Louis list not to my council, as,
Without sure proof he will not, France is lost!
What more? [*To Marion.*

Marion.

Dark hints of some design to seize
Your person, in your palace: nothing clear:
His highness trembled while he spoke; the words
Did choke each other.

Rich.

So! Who is the brother
You recommended to the duke?

Marion.

Whoever
Your eminence may father.

Rich.

Darling Marion! [14]

[*Goes to the table, and returns with a purse. Marion affects to refuse, but presently accepts the purse.*

There—pshaw—a trifle! What an eye you have!
And what a smile!—Ah, you fair perdition—
'T is well I 'm old!

Marion. [*Aside.*

What a great man he is!

Rich.

You are sure they meet?—the hour?

Marion.

At midnight.

Rich.

And
You will engage to give the duke's dispatch,
To whom I send?

Marion.

Ay, marry!

Rich. [*Aside.*

Huguet? No:
He will be wanted elsewhere. Joseph?—zealous,
But too well known—too much the elder brother.
Mauprat?—alas! it is his wedding day.
François?—the man of men! unnoted, young:
Ambitious. [*Strikes bell.*] François!

[*Enter François* L. 1. E.

Rich.

Follow this fair lady.
Find him the suiting garments, Marion: take
My fleetest steed: arm thyself to the teeth:
A packet will be given you, with orders,
No matter what! The instant that your hand
Closes upon it, clutch it, like your honour,
Which death alone can steal, or ravish; set
Spurs to your steed—be breathless, till you stand
Again before me. Stay, sir, you will find me
Two short leagues hence, at Ruelle, in my castle.
Young man, be blithe! for—note me—from the hour
I grasp that packet, think your guardian star
Rains fortune on you!

Fran.

If I fail——

Rich.

Fail—
In the lexicon of youth, which fate reserves
For a bright manhood, there is no such word
As *fail!*—You will instruct him further, Marion.
Follow her—but at distance: speak not to her,
Till you are housed: farewell, boy! never say "*Fail*" again.

Fran.

I will not!

Rich.

That's my young hero!
[*Exeunt François and Marion* R. U. E.
So, they would seize my person in this palace?
I cannot guess their scheme:—but my retinue
Is here too large: a single traitor could
[*Strikes bell. Joseph enters* C.
Strike impotent the faith of thousands.—Joseph,
Art sure of Huguet?—Think; we hanged his father.

Jos.

But you have bought the son; heaped favours on him.

Rich.

Trash!—favours past—that's nothing. In his hours
Of confidence with you, has he named the favours
To come he counts on?

Jos.

Yes—a colonel's rank,
And letters of nobility.

Rich.

What, Huguet?

[*Huguet enters* C, *but is unseen by the Cardinal and Joseph.*

Hug.

My own name: soft! [*Hides himself.*

Rich.

My bashful Huguet: that can never be!
We have him not the less: we 'll promise it—
And see the king withholds. Yes,
We 'll count on Huguet.

Hug. [*Aside.*

To thy cost, deceiver.

[*Huguet retires.*

Rich.

You are right: this treason
Assumes a fearful aspect: but once crushed,
Its very ashes shall manure the soil
Of power, and ripen such full sheaves of greatness,
That all the summer of my fate shall seem
Fruitless, beside the autumn!

Jos.

The saints grant it!

[*Huguet advances.*

Hug.

My lord Cardinal,
Your eminence bade me seek you at this hour.

Rich.

Did I?—True, Huguet.—So, you overheard
Strange talk amongst these gallants: snares and traps
For Richelieu?—Well, we 'll balk them; let me think;—
The men at arms you head—how many?

Hug.

Twenty,[15] my lord.

Rich.

All trusty?

Hug.

Yes, for ordinary
Occasions: if for great ones, I would change
Three-fourths at least.

Rich.

Ay, what are great occasions?

Hug.

Great bribes.

Rich. [*To Joseph.*

Good lack, he knows some paragons
Superior to great bribes!

Hug.

True gentlemen,
Who have transgressed the laws, and value life,
And lack not gold; your eminence alone
Can grant them pardon: *ergo*, you can trust them!

Rich.

Logic. So be it—let this honest twenty
Be armed and mounted.
They do not strike till morning,

Yet I will shift the quarter: bid the grooms
Prepare the litter—I will hence to Ruelle
While daylight lasts: and one hour after midnight
You and your twenty saints shall seek me thither.
You 're made to rise! You are, sir;—eyes of lynx,
Ears of the stag, a footfall like the snow:
You are a valiant fellow; yea, a trusty,
Religious, exemplary, incorrupt,
And precious jewel of a fellow, Huguet!
If I live long enough,—ay, mark my words—
If I live long enough, you 'll be a colonel—
[*Huguet bows very low.*
Noble, perhaps!—One hour, sir, after midnight.

Hug.

You leave me dumb with gratitude, my lord:
I 'll pick the trustiest [*aside*] Marion's house can furnish.
[*Exit Huguet.*

Rich.

Good: all favours,
If François be but bold, and Huguet honest.
Huguet I half suspect; he bowed too low;
'T is not his way.

Jos.

This is the curse, my lord
Of your high state; suspicion of all men.

Rich. [*Sadly.*

True; true; my leeches bribed to poison, pages
To strangle me in sleep; my very king
(This brain the unresting loom, from which was woven
The purple of his greatness) leagued against me:
Old, childless, friendless, broken, all forsake—
All—all—but—

Jos.

What?

Rich.

The indomitable heart
Of Armand Richelieu!

Jos.

And Joseph——

Rich. [*After a pause.*

You—
Yes, I believe you—yes; for all men fear you,
And the world loves you not: and I, friend Joseph,
I am the only man, who could, my Joseph,
Make you a bishop.[16] [*Joseph bows very low.*
Come we 'll go to dinner,
And talk the while of methods to advance
[*Joseph looks eagerly into the Cardinal's face, and with disappointment, bows very low at "our mother church."*
Our mother church.[17]
Ah, Joseph—Bishop Joseph! [*Exeunt* R. I. E.

CURTAIN.

Act Third.

SECOND DAY: MIDNIGHT.

Scene First. { RUELLE. RICHELIEU'S CASTLE. A GOTHIC CHAMBER. MOONLIGHT SHINING THROUGH THE WINDOW. BED, ON DAIS C.

Rich. [*Reading.*

"In silence and at night the conscience feels
That life should soar to nobler ends than power."
So sayest thou, sage and sober moralist! [*In soliloquy.*
But wert thou tried?
Ye safe and formal men,
Who write the deeds, and with unfeverish hand
Weigh in nice scales the motives of the great,
Ye cannot know what ye have never tried.
Alas, I am not happy: blanched and seared
Before my time; breathing an air of hate,
And seeing daggers in the eyes of men;
Bearding kings,
And braved by lackeys [18]; murder at my bed;
And lone amidst the mutitudinous web,
With the dread three — that are the fates who hold
The woof and shears — the monk, the spy, the headsman:
And this is power! Alas! I am not happy.
[*After a pause, during which he is convulsed with pain.*
Ah! here! that spasm, again! How life and death
Do wrestle for me momently!
[*Turning again to his book.*
Speak to me, moralist: I'll heed thy counsel.
Were it not best—
[*Enter François hastily* L.

Philosophy, thou liest! [*Flinging away the book.*
Quick — the dispatch! — Power! — Empire! Boy — the packet!

Fran.

Kill me, my lord!

Rich.

They knew thee — they suspected —
They gave it not ——

Fran.

He gave it — *he* — the Count
De Baradas — with his own hand he gave it!

Rich.

Baradas! Joy! out with it!

Fran.

Listen,
And then dismiss me to the headsman.

Rich.

Ha!
Go on.

Fran.

They led me to a chamber: there
Orleans and Baradas, and some half-score
Whom I knew not, were met ——

Rich.

Not more!

Fran.

But from
The adjoining chamber broke the din of voices,
The clattering tread of armèd men: at times
A shriller cry, that yelled out, "Death to Richelieu!"

Rich.

Speak not of me; thy country is in danger!

Fran.

Baradas
Questioned me close — demurred — until, at last,
O'er-ruled by Orleans, gave the packet — told me
That life and death were in the scroll:
And Orleans promised thousands,
When Bouillon's trumpets in the streets of Paris
Rang out shrill answer: hastening from the house,
My footstep in the stirrup, Marion stole
Across the threshold, whispering, "Lose no moment
Ere Richelieu have the packet: tell him, too,
Murder is in the winds of night, and Orleans
Swears, ere the dawn the Cardinal shall be clay."
She said, and trembling fled within: when lo!
A hand of iron griped me! Thro' the dark,
Gleamed the dim shadow of an armèd man:
Ere I could draw, the prize was wrested from me,
And a hoarse voice gasped — "Spy, I spare thee, for
This steel is virgin to thy lord!" — with that
He vanished. — Scared and trembling for thy safety,
I mounted, fled, and kneeling at thy feet,
Implore thee to acquit my faith; but not,
Like him, to spare my life.

Rich.

Who spake of life?
I bade thee grasp that packet as thine honour —
A jewel worth whole hecatombs of lives!
Begone! Redeem thine honour! Back to Marion —
Or Baradas — or Orleans: track the robber:
Regain the packet — or crawl on to age —
Age and gray hairs like mine — and know thou hast lost
That which had made thee great and saved thy country
See me not till thou hast bought the right to see me.
Away! Nay, cheer thee! thou hast not failed yet
There 's no such word as "fail!"

Fran.

Bless you, my lord,
For that one smile! I 'll wear it on my heart
To light me back to triumph.[19] [*Exit François.* L.

Rich.

The poor youth!
An elder had asked life. I love the young:
For as great men live not in their own time
But in the age to come, so in the young my soul
Makes many Richelieus. He will win it yet.
François? He 's gone. My murder; Marion's warning;
This bravo's threat: O for the morrow's dawn!
I 'll set my spies to work — I 'll make all space,
As does the sun, an universal eye.
Huguet shall track — Joseph confess — ha! ha!
Strange, while I laughed I shuddered, and e'en now
Thro' the chill air the beating of my heart
Sounds like the death-watch by a sick man's pillow.
If Huguet could deceive me! [*Listens. Noise outside.*
Hoofs without—
The gates unclose — steps, near and nearer!
[*Enter Julie de Mortemar* L.

Julie.

Cardinal! My father! *Falls at his feet.*

Rich.

Julie! at this hour; and in tears.
What ails thee?

Julie.

I am safe with thee!

Rich.

Safe! why in all the storms of this wild world
What wind would mar the violet?

Julie.

That man—
Why did I love him? — clinging to a breast
That knows no shelter?
Listen: late at noon—
The marriage-day — ev'n then no more a lover,
He left me coldly. Well, I sought my chamber
To weep and wonder; but to hope and dream:
Sudden a mandate from the king,— to attend
Forthwith his pleasure at the Louvre.

Rich.

Ha!
You did obey the summons; and the king
Reproached your hasty nuptials.

Julie.

Were that all!
He frowned and chid; proclaimed the bond unlawful;
Bade me not quit my chamber in the palace:
And there at night—alone—this night! all still,
He sought my presence—dared!—thou read'st the heart,
Read mine: I cannot speak it!

Rich.

He, a king!
You—woman; well, you yielded!

Julie.

Cardinal!
Dare you say "yielded?" Humbled and abashed,
He from the chamber crept: this mighty Louis;
Crept like a baffled felon!—yielded! Ah!
More royalty in woman's honest heart
Than dwells within the crownèd majesty
And sceptered anger of a hundred kings!
Yielded! Heavens!—yielded!

Rich.

To my breast,—close—close!
The world would never need a Richelieu, if
Men—bearded, mailèd men—the lords of earth—
Resisted flattery, falsehood, avarice, pride,
As this poor child, with the dove's innocent scorn,
Her sex's tempters, vanity and power!
He left you—well!

Julie.

Then came a sharper trial!
At the king's suit, the Count de Baradas
Sought me, to soothe, to fawn, to flatter, while
On his smooth lip insult appeared more hateful

For the false mask of pity: letting fall
Dark hints of treachery, with a world of sighs
That heaven had granted to so base a lord
The heart whose coldest friendship were to him
What Mexico to misers! Stung at last
By my disdain, the dim and glimmering sense
Of his cloaked words broke into bolder light;
And then—ah! then, my haughty spirit failed me;
Then I was weak—wept—O! such bitter tears!
For (turn thy face aside, and let me whisper
The horror to thine ear) then I did learn
That he—that Adrian—that my husband—knew
The king's polluting suit and deemed it honour!
Then all the terrible and loathsome truth
Glared on me; coldness, waywardness, reserve,
Mystery of looks, words—all unravelled, and
I saw the impostor where I had loved the god.

Rich.

I think thou wrongest thy husband—but proceed.

Julie.

Did you say "wronged" him? Cardinal, my father,
Did you say "wronged?" Prove it! and life shall glow
One prayer for thy reward and his forgiveness.

Rich.

Let me know all.

Julie.

To the despair he caused
The courtier left me; but amid the chaos
Darted one guiding ray—to 'scape—to fly—
Reach Adrian, learn the worst: 't was then near midnight;
Trembling, I left my chamber; sought the queen;
Fell at her feet; revealed the unholy peril;
Implored her aid to flee our joint disgrace:
Moved, she embraced and soothed me; nay, preserved.
Her words sufficed to unlock the palace gates;

I hastened home — but home was desolate —
No Adrian there! Fearing the worst, I fled
To thee, directed hither. As my wheels
Paused at thy gates, the clang of arms behind
The ring of hoofs ——

Rich.

'T was but my guards, fair trembler. [*Aside.*
So Huguet keeps his word, my omens wronged him.

Julie.

O, in one hour what years of anguish crowd!

Rich.

Nay, there 's no danger now. Thou need'st rest.
Come, thou shalt lodge beside me. Tush! be cheered!
My rosiest Amazon, thou wrong'st thy Theseus.
All will be well yet; yet all well.

[*During this speech the moonlight fades away, and the scene is darkened.*

[*Exeunt* L. U. E. *Enter Huguet* L. I. E. *and De Mauprat, in complete armour, his visor down.*

Hug.

Not here!

De Maup.

O, I will find him; fear not: hence and guard
The galleries where the menials sleep; plant sentries
At every outlet. Chance should throw no shadow
Between the vengeance and the victim! Go!
Ere yon brief vapour that obscures the moon,
As doth our deed pale conscience, pass away,
The mighty shall be ashes.

Hug.

Will you not
A second arm?

De Maup.

To slay one weak old man?
Away! No lesser wrongs than mine can make
This murder lawful. Hence!

Hug.

A short farewell!

[*Exit Huguet* L. I. E. *Enter Richelieu,* L. U. E. ***not*** *perceiving De Mauprat.*

Rich.

How heavy is the air! the vestal lamp
Of the sad moon, weary with vigil, dies
In the still temple of the solemn heaven.
The very darkness lends itself to fear—
To treason——

De Maup.

And to death!

Rich.

Ha!
What art thou, wretch?

De Maup.

Thy doomsman!

Rich.

Ho, my guards!
Huguet! Montbrassil! Vermont!

De Maup.

Ay, thy spirits
Forsake thee, wizard; thy bold men of mail
Are my confederates. Stir not! but one step,
And know the next—thy grave!

Rich.

Thou liest, knave!
I am old, infirm—most feeble—but thou liest!
Armand de Richelieu dies not by the hand
Of man: the stars have said it;[20] and the voice
Of my own prophet and oracular soul
Confirms the shining sybils! Call them all—
Thy brother butchers: earth hath no such fiend—
No! as one parricide of his father-land,
Who dares in Richelieu murder France!

De Maup.

Thy stars
Deceive thee, Cardinal: thy soul of wiles
May against kings and armaments avail,
And mock the embattled world; but powerless now
Against the sword of one resolvèd man,
Upon whose forehead thou hast written shame!
Listen:
In his hot youth, a soldier urged to crime
Against the State, placed in your hands his life;
You did not strike the blow—but o'er his head,
Upon the gossamer thread of your caprice,
Hovered the axe: your death
Had set him free: he purposed not nor prayed it.
One day you summoned—mocked him with smooth pardon,
Showered wealth upon him, bade an angel's face
Turn earth to paradise.

Rich.

Well!

De Maup.

Was this mercy?
A Cæsar's generous vengeance?—Cardinal, no!
Judas, not Cæsar, was the model! You
Saved him from death, for shame.
Expect no mercy!
Behold De Mauprat!

[*Lifts his visor.*

Rich.

To thy knees, and crawl
For pardon; or, I tell thee, thou shalt live
For such remorse, that, did I hate thee, I
Would bid thee strike, that I might be avenged!
It was to save my Julie from the king,
That in thy valour I forgave thy crime.
It was, when thou—the rash and ready tool,
Yea, of that shame thou loath'st, didst leave thy hearth

To the polluter—in these arms thy bride
Found the protecting shelter thine withheld.
Julie de Mauprat—Julie!

[*Enter Julie* L. U. E.

Lo! my witness, sir!

De Maup.

What marvel's this?—I dream! My Julie—thou!

Julie.

Henceforth all bond
Between us twain is broken. Were it not
For this old man, I might, in truth, have lost
The right—now mine—to scorn thee.

Rich.

You hear her, sir.

De Maup.

Thou, with some slander, hast her sense infected!

Julie.

No, sir; he did excuse thee in despite
Of all that wears the face of truth. Thy friend—
Thy confidant—familiar—Baradas—
Himself revealed thy baseness.

De Maup.

Baseness!

Rich.

Ay;
That thou didst court dishonour.

De Maup.

Baradas!
Where is thy thunder, Heaven? Duped! snared! undone!
Thou—thou couldst not believe him! Thou dost love me!

Julie.

Love him! Ah!
Be still, my heart! Love you I did: how fondly,
Woman—if women were my listeners now—
Alone could tell! Forever fled my dream:
Farewell—all's over!

Rich.

Nay, my daughter, these
Are but the blinding mists of day-break love
Sprung from its very heat, and heralding
A noon of happy summer. Take her hand
And speak the truth with which your heart runs over—
That this Count Judas, this incarnate falsehood,
Never lied more than when he told thy Julie
That Adrian loved her not—except, indeed,
When he told Adrian Julie could betray him.

Julie. [*Embracing De Mauprat.*

You love me, then! you love me! and they wronged you!

De Maup.

Ah, couldst thou doubt?

Rich.

Why, man, the very mole
Less blind than thou! Baradas loves thy wife:
Had hoped her hand; hopes even now
To make thy corse his footstool to thy bed.
Where was thy wit, man? Ho! these schemes are glass!
The very sun shines through them.

De Maup.

O, my lord, [*Kneels.*
Can you forgive me?

Rich.

Ay, and save you!

De Maup.

Save!—
Terrible word! O, save thyself! these halls
Swarm with thy foes: already for thy blood
Pants thirsty murder!

Julie.

Murder!

Rich.

Hush! put by
The woman. Hush! a shriek—a cry—a breath
Too loud would startle from its horrent pause
The swooping death! Go to the door and listen!
Now for escape!

[*Julie goes to door* L.

De Maup.

None—none! Their blades shall pass
This heart to thine.

Rich. [*Dryly.*

An honourable outwork,
But much too near the citadel. I think
That I can trust you now.

[*Slowly, and gazing on him intently.*

Yes: I will trust you.
How many of my troop league with you?

De Maup.

All!—
We are your troop!

Rich.

And Huguet?

De Maup.

Is our captain.

Rich.

Retributive Power!
This comes of spies.
All? The lion's skin too short to-night;
Now for the fox's.

Julie.

A hoarse gathering murmur!
Hurrying and heavy footsteps!

Rich.

Ha! the posterns!

De Maup.

No egress where no sentry!

Rich.

I have it! to my chamber—quick! Come, Julie!
Hush! Mauprat come!

Voices Outside.

Death to the Cardinal!

Rich.

We will
Baffle them yet.

[*Exeunt De Mauprat, Julie, and Richelieu* C.

Hug. [*Speaking outside.*

This way—this way!

[*Enter, in eager haste, Huguet and the Conspirators* L. *De Mauprat, appearing, throws back curtains* C. *disclosing Richelieu upon his bed, and apparently dead.*

De Maup.

Live the king!
Richelieu is dead!

Omnes.

Dead!

De Maup.

I watched him till he slept.
Heed me. No trace of blood reveals the deed:
Strangled in sleep: his health had long been broken:
Found breathless in his bed. So runs our tale;
Remember! Back to Paris: Orleans gives
Ten thousand crowns, and Baradas a lordship,
To him who first gluts vengeance with the news
That Richelieu is in heaven! Quick, that all France
May share your joy!

Hug.

I shall be noble!

De Maup.

Away.

Omnes.

To horse! to horse!

[*Exeunt Conspirators* L. *As they throng out Julie enters, and De Mauprat goes to Richelieu, who leaps up and exclaims:*

Rich.

Bloodhounds, I laugh at you!

QUICK CURTAIN.

Act Fourth.

THIRD DAY.

Scene First. { PARIS. THE GARDENS OF THE LOUVRE. ORLEANS, BARADAS, DE BERINGHEN, COURTIERS, etc., DISCOVERED.

Orl.

How does my brother bear the Cardinal's death?

Bar.

With grief when thinking on the toils of State;
With joy when thinking on the eyes of Julie.
At times he sighs, "Who now shall govern France?"
Anon exclaims, "Who now shall baffle Louis?"

[*Enter Louis XIII. and Courtiers* R. U. E.

Orl.

Now, my liege, now I can embrace a brother.

Louis.

Dear Gaston, yes. I do believe you love me:
Richelieu denied it—severed us too long.
A great man, Gaston! Who shall govern France?

Bar.

Yourself, my liege. That swart and potent star
Eclipsed your royal orb. He served the country;
But did he serve, or seek to sway, the king?

Louis.

You 're right—he was an able politician,[21]
That 's all.
He was most disloyal in that marriage.
[*Querulously.*] He knew that Julie pleased me:—a clear proof
He never loved me!

Bar.

O, most clear! But now
No bar between the lady and your will.
This writ makes all secure: a week or two
[*Shows a paper.*
In the Bastile will sober Mauprat's love,
And leave him eager to dissolve a Hymen
That brings him such a home.

Louis.

See to it, count.
[*Exit Baradas* R. I. E.
I 'll summon Julie back. A word with you. [*To Orleans.*
[*King Louis takes aside Orleans, and passes, conversing, through the gardens, followed by courtiers* L. U. E. *Enter François.*

Fran.

All search, as yet, in vain for Mauprat: not
At home since yesternoon: a soldier told me
He saw him pass this way with hasty strides:
Should he meet Baradas they 'd rend it from him:
Benignant fortune smile upon me:
I am thy son: if thou desert'st me now,
Come death and snatch me from disgrace.
[*Enter De Mauprat* C.

De Maup.

O, let me—
Let me but meet him foot to foot—I'll dig
The Judas from his heart; albeit the king
Should o'er him cast the purple!

Fran.

Mauprat! hold:
Where is the——

De Maup.

Well! What wouldst thou?

Fran.

The dispatch!
The packet. Look on me—I serve the Cardinal—
You know me. Did you not keep guard last night
By Marion's house?

De Maup.

I did:—no matter now!
They told me he was here!

Fran.

O joy! quick—quick—
The packet thou didst wrest from me?

De Maup.

The packet?
What—art thou he I deemed the Cardinal's spy,
(Dupe that I was) and overhearing Marion—

Fran.

The same—restore it! haste!

De Maup.

I have it not:
Methought it but revealed our scheme to Richelieu.
[*Enter Baradas* R. I. E.
Stand back!
Now, villain! now I have thee!
Hence, sir! [*To François.*
Draw! [*To Baradas.*

Fran.

Art mad? the king's at hand! leave him to Richelieu.
Speak; the dispatch; to whom——

De Maup.

[*Dashing François aside and rushing upon Baradas.*
Thou triple slanderer!
I'll set my heel upon thy crest!
[*Mauprat and Baradas fight.*

Fran.

Fly—fly! The king!

[*Enter Louis, Orleans, De Beringhen, courtiers and guards* L. U. E.

Louis.

Swords drawn before our very palace!
Have our laws died with Richelieu?

Bar.

Pardon, sire,—
My crime but self-defence.[22] [*Aside to Louis.*] It is De Mauprat!

Louis. [*Sits on garden seat* L.

Dare he thus brave us?

[*Baradas goes to the guard and gives writ to the Captain.*

De Maup. [*To Louis.*

Sire, in the Cardinal's name——

Bar. [*To Captain.*

Seize him! disarm! to the Bastile!

[*De Mauprat is arrested. The Cardinal's march is heard. Then enter Richelieu and Joseph, followed by the Cardinal's guard* C.

All.

The Cardinal!

De Maup. [*To Richelieu.*

Priest and hero—for you are both—
Protect the truth. [*De Mauprat kneels.*

Rich.

What is this? [*Takes writ.*

Bar. [*In consternation.*

The dead returned to life!

Louis.

What! A *mock* death! this tops
The infinite of insult.

De Ber. [*Aside.*

Fact in philosophy: foxes have got
Nine lives, as well as cats!

Bar.

Be firm, my liege.

Louis.

I have assumed the sceptre; I will wield it!

Jos. [*Aside.*

The tide runs counter; there 'll be shipwreck somewhere.

[*Baradas and Orleans keep close to the king—whispering and prompting him, while Richelieu speaks.*

Rich.

High treason! Faviaux! still that stale pretence.
My liege, bad men (ay, count, most knavish men!)
Abuse your royal goodness. For this soldier,
France hath none braver: and his youth's hot folly,
Misled—by whom your highness may conjecture!—
[*To Orleans.*
Is long since cancelled by a loyal manhood.
I, sire, have pardoned him.

Louis.

And we do give
Your pardon to the winds. Sir, do your duty! [*To officer.*

Rich.

What, sire? You do not know—O, pardon me—
You know not yet, that this brave, honest heart,
Stood between mine and murder! Sire! for my sake—
For your old servant's sake—undo this wrong.
See, let me rend the sentence.
[*Offers as if he would tear the writ.*

Louis.

At your peril!
This is too much.—Again, sir, do your duty! [*To officer.*
[*De Mauprat advances.*

Rich.

Speak not, but go: I would not see young valour
So humbled as grey service.

De Maup.

Fare you well!
Save Julie, and console her.
[*De Mauprat goes up with guard. Richelieu goes* R. *to Joseph. The courtiers surround Louis, who sits* L.

Fran. [*Aside to De Mauprat.*

The dispatch!
Your fate, foes, life, hang on a word! to whom?

De Maup.

To Huguet.
[*Exeunt Mauprat and guard* L. U. E.

Bar. [*Aside to François.*

Has he the packet?

Fran. [*Aside to Baradas.*

He will not reveal—
[*Aside.*] Work, brain! beat, heart! "There's no such word as fail."
[*Exit François* R. U. E.

Rich. [*Fiercely.*

Room, my lords, room! The minister of France
Can need no intercession with the king.
[*Courtiers fall back. The king rises.*

Louis.

What means this false report of death, lord Cardinal?

Rich.

Are you then angered, sire, that I still live?

Louis.

No; but such artifice—

Rich.

Not mine: look elsewhere.
Louis—my castle swarmed with the assassins.

Bar. [*Advancing* L.

We have punished them already. Huguet now
In the Bastile. O! my lord, we were prompt
To avenge you—we were——

Rich.

We? Ha! ha! you hear,
My liege! What page, man, in the last court grammar
Made you a plural?[23] Count, you have seized the hireling:—
Sire, shall I name the master?

Louis.

[*Haughtily, to the Cardinal.*

Enough!
Your eminence must excuse a longer audience.
To your own palace: for our conference, this
Nor place, nor season.

Rich.

Good my liege, for Justice,
All place a temple, and all season, summer!
Do you deny me justice? Saints of heaven!
He turns from me! Do you deny me justice?
My liege, my Louis,
Do you refuse me justice—audience even—
In the pale presence of the baffled Murder?[24] [*All start.*

Louis.

Lord Cardinal, one by one you have severed from me
The bonds of human love; all near and dear
Marked out for vengeance, exile, or the scaffold.
You find me now amidst my trustiest friends,
My closest kindred; you would tear them from me;

They murder you forsooth, since me they love.
Enough of plots and treasons for one reign!
Home! home! my lord, and sleep away these phantoms!
[*Louis and courtiers cross* R.

Rich.

Sire
I—patience, heaven! sweet heaven! Sire, from the foot
Of that great throne, these hands have raised aloft
On an Olympus, looking down on mortals
And worshipped by their awe—before the foot
Of that high throne, spurn you the grey-haired man,
Who gave you empire, and now sues for safety?

Louis.

No:—when we see your eminence in truth
At the foot of the throne, we 'll listen to you.
[*Exit Louis followed by all the Courtiers* R.

Orl. [*As he goes out.*

Saved!

Bar. [*As he goes out.*

For this, deep thanks to Julie and to Mauprat!

Jos.

If you had been less haughty——

Rich.

No time for ifs and buts!
I will accuse these traitors.
François shall witness that De Baradas
Gave him the secret missive for De Bouillon,
And told him life and death were in the scroll.
I will—I will!

Jos.

Tush! François is your creature;
So they will say, and laugh at you: your witness
Must be that same dispatch.

Rich.

Away to Marion!

Jos.

I have been there: she is seized, removed, imprisoned,
By the count's orders.

Rich.

Goddess of bright dreams,
My country, shalt thou lose me now, when most
Thou need'st thy worshipper? My native land!
Let me but ward this dagger from thy heart,
And die but on thy bosom!

[*Enter Julie* C.

Julie.

Heaven, I thank thee!
It cannot be, or this all-powerful
Would not stand idly thus.

Rich.

What dost thou here?
Home!

Julie.

Home? Is Adrian there? you 're dumb, yet strive
For words; I see them trembling on your lip,
But choked by pity. It was truth—all truth!
Seized—the Bastile—and in your presence, too!
Cardinal, where is Adrian? Think! he saved
Your life: your name is infamy, if wrong
Should come to his!

Rich.

Be soothed, child.

Julie.

Child no more;
I love, and I am woman! Hope and suffer:
Love, suffering, hope—what else doth make the strength
And majesty of woman? Let thine eyes meet mine:

Answer me but one word: I am a wife:
I ask thee for my home, my fate, my all—
Where is my husband?

Rich.

You are Richelieu's ward;
A soldier's bride: they who insist on truth
Must outface fear: you ask me for your husband?
There—where the clouds of heaven look darkest, o'er
The domes of the Bastile![25]

Julie.

O, mercy! mercy!
Save him, restore him, father! Art thou not
The Cardinal-king? the lord of life and death—
Beneath whose light, as deeps beneath the moon,
The solemn tides of empire ebb and flow?—
Art thou not Richelieu?

Rich.

Yesterday I was!—
To-day a very weak old man: to-morrow,
I know not what! [*Crosses to* L.

Julie. [*To Joseph.*

Do you conceive his meaning?
Alas! I cannot. But, methinks my senses
Are duller than they were.

Jos.

The king is chafed
Against his servant. Lady, while we speak,
The lackey of the ante-room is not
More powerless than the minister of France.
[*Joseph goes to Richelieu. Enter First Courtier* R.

First Cour.

Madame de Mauprat!
Pardon, your eminence—even now I seek
This lady's home, commanded by the king
To pray her presence.

Julie. [*Clinging to Richelieu.*

Think of my dead father!
Think, how, an infant, clinging to your knees,
And looking to your eyes, the wrinkled care
Fled from your brow before the smile of childhood,
Fresh from the dews of heaven! Think of this,
And take me to your breast.

Rich. [*To Courtier.*

To those who sent you!
And say you found the virtue they would slay,
Here—couched upon this heart, as at an altar,
And sheltered by the wings of sacred Rome!
Begone! [*The Courtier uncovers and bows reverently.*

First Cour.

My lord, I am your friend and servant.
Misjudge me not; but never yet was Louis
So roused against you: shall I take this answer?—
It were to be your foe.

Rich.

All time my foe,
If I, a priest, could cast this holy sorrow
Forth from her last asylum!

[*Exit First Courtier* R. *Julie faints in the Cardinal's arms.*

Rich.

God help thee, child! She hears not! Look upon her!
Her father loved me so! and in that age
When friends are brothers; she has been to me
Soother, nurse, plaything, daughter. Are these tears?[36]
O! shame! shame! dotage!

[*Joseph assists to place Julie on seat* L.

Jos.

Tears are not for eyes
That rather need the lightning, which can pierce
Through barrèd gates and triple walls, to smite
Crime, where it cowers in secret! The dispatch!

Set every spy to work; the morrow's sun
Must see that written treason in your hands,
Or rise upon your ruin.

Rich.

Ay — and close upon my corse.
Yes! to-morrow, triumph or death.
Look up, child! Lead us, Joseph.

[*As they are going* C., *enter Baradas and De Beringhen* R.

Bar.

My lord, the king cannot believe your eminence
So far forgets your duty, and his greatness,
As to resist his mandate. Pray you, madam,
Obey the king: no cause for fear.

Julie. [*To Richelieu.*

My father!

Rich. [*To Baradas.*

She shall not stir!

Bar.

You are not of her kindred —
An orphan ——

Rich.

The country is her mother!

Bar.

The country is the king!

Rich.

Ay, is it so;
Then wakes the power, which in the age of iron [27]
Burst forth to curb the great, and raise the low.
Mark where she stands: [*He places Julie* L. C.
Around her form I draw
The awful circle [28] of our solemn church!

[*Baradas and De Beringhen uncover.*

Set but a foot within that holy ground,
And on thy head — yea, though it wore a crown —
I launch the curse of Rome!

[*All but Richelieu and Joseph kneel. Joseph displays the cross.*

Bar. [*Rises.*

I dare not brave you!
I do but speak the orders of my king.
The church, your rank, power, very word, my lord,
Suffice you for resistance: blame yourself,
If it should cost you power!

Rich.

That my stake. Ah!
Dark gamester! what is thine! Look to it well!
Lose not a trick. By this same hour to-morrow
Thou shalt have France, or I thy head!

Bar. [*Aside to De Beringhen.*

He cannot have the dispatch?

Jos. [*Aside.*

Patience! Patience!

Rich.

O! monk!
Leave patience to the saints—for I am human!
Did not thy father die for France, poor orphan!
[*To Julie, embracing her.*
And now they say thou hast no father. Fie!
Art thou not pure and good? If so, thou art
A part of that—the beautiful, the sacred—
Which, in all climes, men that have hearts adore
By the great title of their mother country.

Bar.

He wanders!

Rich.

So; cling close unto my breast:
Here where thou droop'st lies France! I am very feeble:
Of little use it seems to either now.
Well, well — we will go home.

Bar.

In sooth, my lord,
You do need rest; the burdens of the state
O'ertask your health.

Rich. [*To Joseph.*

I'm patient, see!

Bar.

His mind
And life are breaking fast.

Rich. [*Overhearing him.*

Irreverent ribald!
If so, beware the falling ruins! Hark!
I tell thee, scorner of these whitening hairs,
When this snow melteth there shall come a flood!
Avaunt! my name is Richelieu — I defy thee!
Walk blindfold on: behind thee stalks the headsman.
Ha! ha! — how pale he glares! Heaven save my country!
[*Falls back in Joseph's arms.*

CURTAIN.

Act Fifth.

Scene First. PARIS. APARTMENT OF STATE IN THE LOUVRE. THRONE R. BARADAS AND ORLEANS DISCOVERED.

Bar.

All smiles: the Cardinal's swoon of yesterday
Heralds his death to-day: could he survive,
It would not be as minister—so great
The king's resentment at the priest's defiance.
All smiles! and yet should this accursed De Mauprat
Have given our packet to another—'Sdeath!
I dare not think of it!

Orl.

You've sent to search him?

Bar.

Sent, sir, to search?—that hireling hands may find
Upon him, naked, with its broken seal,
That scroll whose every word is death? No—no—
These hands alone must clutch that awful secret.
I dare not leave the palace, night or day,
While Richelieu lives: his minions, creatures, spies—
Not one must reach the king.

Orl.

What hast thou done?

Bar.

Summoned De Mauprat hither.

Orl.

Could this Huguet,
Who prayed thy presence with so fierce a fervour,
Have thieved the scroll?

Bar.

Huguet was housed with us,
The very moment we dismissed the courier.
It cannot be: a stale trick for reprieve.
But, to make sure, I've sent our trustiest friend
To see and sift him. Hist! here comes the king.
How fare you, sire?

[*Enter Louis* C.

Louis.

In the same mind I have
Decided: yes, he would forbid your presence,
My brother,—yours, my friend: then, Julie, too:
Thwarts—braves—defies—

[*Suddenly turning to Baradas.*

We make you minister.
Gaston, for you—the baton of our armies.
You love me, do you not?

Orl.

O, love you, sire!
[*Aside.*] Never so much as now.

Bar.

May I deserve
Your trust [*aside*]—until you sign your abdication.
My liege, but one way left to daunt De Mauprat,
And Julie to divorce.—We must prepare
The death-writ: what, tho' signed and sealed? we can
Withhold the enforcement.

Louis.

Ah, you may prepare it:
We need not urge it to effect.

Bar.

Exactly!
No haste, my liege. [*Aside.*] He may live one hour longer.

[*Enter Courtier* C.

Cour.

The Lady Julie, sire, implores an audience.

Louis.

Aha! repentant of her folly!—Well,
Admit her.

Bar.

Sire, she comes for Mauprat's pardon.
And the conditions——

Louis.

You are minister,
We leave to you our answer.

[*The Captain of the Guard enters* L. *and whispers to Baradas, who has advanced to meet him.*

Capt.

The Chevalier
De Mauprat waits below.

Bar. [*Aside.*

Now the dispatch!

[*Exeunt Baradas and Captain* L. *Enter Julie* C.

Julie.

My liege, you sent for me. I come where grief
Should come when guiltless, while the name of king
Is holy on the earth. Here, at the feet
Of power, I kneel for mercy.

Louis.

Mercy, Julie,
Is an affair of state. The Cardinal should
In this be your interpreter.

Julie.

Alas!
I know not if that mighty spirit now
Stoops to the things of earth. Nay, while I speak,
Perchance he hears the orphan by the throne

Where kings themselves need pardon.—O, my liege,
Be father to the fatherless: in you
Dwells my last hope.

[*Enter Baradas* L.

Bar. [*Aside.*

He has not the dispatch;
Smiled while we searched, and braves me.

Louis. [*Gently.*

What wouldst thou?

Julie.

A single life. You reign o'er millions; what
Is one man's life to you? and yet to me
'T is France—'t is earth—'tis everything!—a life,
A human life—my husband's.

Louis.

[*Aside to Baradas, who has quietly approached* R.

Speak to her.
I am not marble: give her hope—or—— [*Exit Louis* C.

Bar. [*To Julie.*

Madam,
Vex not your king, whose heart, too soft for justice,
Leaves to his ministers that solemn charge.

Julie.

You were his friend.

Bar.

I was, before I loved thee.

Julie.

Loved me!

Bar.

Hush, Julie! couldst thou misinterpret
My acts, thoughts, motives, nay, my very words,
Here—in this palace?

Julie.

Now I know I 'm mad:
Even that memory failed me.

Bar.

I am young,
Well-born and brave as Mauprat:—for thy sake
I peril what he has not—fortune—power;
All to great souls most dazzling. I alone
Can save thee from thy tyrant, now my puppet.
Be mine: annul the mockery of this marriage,
And, on the day I clasp thee to my breast,
De Mauprat shall be free.

Julie.

Thou durst not speak
Thus in his ear!
[*Pointing to Louis, who is seen, passing, at back, with Orleans.*
Thou double traitor!—tremble!
I will unmask thee.

Bar.

I will say thou ravest.
And, see this scroll: its letters shall be blood!
Go to the king, count with me word for word:
And while you pray the life—I write the sentence!
[*Goes to table* R.

Julie.

Stay, stay. [*Rushing to the king, who enters* C.
You have a kind and princely heart,
Tho' sometimes it is silent: you were born
To power—it has not flushed you into madness,
As it doth meaner men. Banish my husband—
Dissolve our marriage—cast me to that grave
Of human ties, where hearts congeal to ice,
In the dark convent's everlasting winter
(Surely eno' for justice, hate, revenge),
But spare this life, thus lonely, scathed, and bloomless;
And when thou stand'st for judgment on thine own,
The deed shall shine beside thee as an angel.

Louis. [*Much affected.*

Go, go, to Baradas: and annul thy marriage,
And——

Julie.

[*Anxiously, and watching his countenance.*

Be his bride?

Louis.

A form, a mere decorum;
Thou know'st I love thee.

Julie.

O, thou sea of shame,
And not one star.

[*The king goes up the stage, and passes out* C. *in evident emotion.*

Bar. [*Advances.*

Well, thy election, Julie:
This hand—his grave!

Julie.

His grave! and I——

Bar.

Can save him.
Swear to be mine.

Julie.

That were a bitterer death!
Avaunt, thou tempter! I did ask his life
A boon, and not the barter of dishonour.
The heart can break, and scorn you: wreak your malice;
Adrian and I will leave you this sad earth,
And pass together hand in hand to heaven.

Bar.

You have decided. Listen to me, lady:
I am no base intriguer. I adored thee
From the first glance of those inspiring eyes:
With thee entwined ambition, hope, the future.

I will not lose thee! I can place thee nearest—
Ay, to the throne—nay, on the throne, perchance:
My star is at its zenith. Look upon me;
Hast thou decided?

Julie.

No, no; you can see
How weak I am; be human, sir—one moment.

Bar.

[*Signals by stamping. Enter De Mauprat, with guards* L.

Behold thy husband: shall he pass to death,
And know thou couldst have saved him?

Julie.

Adrian, speak!
But say you wish to live!—if not your wife
Your slave: do with me as you will!

De Maup.

Once more!—
Why this is mercy, count! O, think, my Julie,
Life, at the best, is short—but love immortal!

Bar. [*Taking Julie's hand.*

Ah, loveliest——

Julie.

Go! that touch has made me iron!
We have decided—death!

Bar. [*To De Mauprat.*

Now, say to whom
Thou gavest the packet, and thou yet shalt live.

De Maup.

I 'll tell thee nothing.

Bar.

Hark,—the rack!

De Maup.

Thy penance
Forever, wretch!—What rack is like the conscience?

Bar.

Hence to the headsman!

[*Enter a Page* C. *He announces:*

Page.

His Eminence, the Cardinal, Duc de Richelieu.

[*Enter Richelieu* C., *very feeble, leaning on Joseph, attended by gentlemen, pages, etc., and followed by three secretaries of state, with papers.*

Julie. [*Rushing to Richelieu.*

You live—you live—and Adrian shall not die!

Rich.

Not if an old man's prayers, himself near death,
Can aught avail thee, daughter! Count, you now
[*To Baradas.*
Hold what I held on earth:—one boon, my lord,
This soldier's life.

Bar.

The stake—my head!—you said it.
I cannot lose one trick. Remove your prisoner.
[*To officer.*

Julie.

No!—No!—

[*Enter Louis and Courtiers* C.

Rich. [*To officer.*

Hold, sir.
[*To the king.*
My liege,
Your worn-out servant, willing to spare you
Some pain of conscience, would forestall your wishes:
I do resign my office.

All.

You!

Julie.

All 's over.

Rich.

My end draws near. These sad ones, sire, I love them:
I do not ask his life; but suffer justice
To halt, until I can dismiss his soul,
Charged with an old man's blessing.

Louis.

Surely!

Bar.

Sire——

Louis.

Silence: small favour to a dying servant.

Rich.

You would consign your armies to the baton
Of your most honoured brother. Sire, so be it.
Your minister, the Count de Baradas;
A most sagacious choice! Your secretaries
Of state attend me, sire, to render up
The ledgers of a realm.—I do beseech you,
Suffer these noble gentlemen to learn
The nature of the glorious task that waits them,
Here, in my presence.

Louis.

You say well, my lord.

[*To secretaries, as he seats himself on throne.*

Approach, sirs.

[*The secretaries advance and kneel.*

Rich.

I—I—faint!—air—air—

[*De Mauprat assists Richelieu to a sofa* L.

I thank you: draw near, my children.

Bar.

He's too weak to question;
Nay, scarce to speak; all's safe.

[*Julie kneels beside the Cardinal. Joseph stands near Richelieu, watching the king. Baradas near the king's chair. A page takes papers from the secretaries and gives them to Louis.*

First Sec.

The affairs of Portugal,
Most urgent, sire:—One short month since the Duc
Braganza was a rebel.

Louis.

And is still.

First Sec.

No, sire; he has succeeded; he is now
Crowned king of Portugal; craves instant succour
Against the arms of Spain.

Louis.

[*Louis looks carelessly at papers and gives them to Baradas.*

We will not grant it
Against his lawful king. Eh, count?

Bar.

No, sire.

First Sec.

But Spain's your deadliest foe: whatever
Can weaken Spain must strengthen France. The Cardinal
Would send the succours;—balance, sire, of Europe!

Louis.

The Cardinal! balance! We'll consider. Eh, count?

Bar.

Yes, sire: [*To Secretary*] fall back.

First Sec.

But——

Bar.

O! fall back, sir.

[*Secretary rises, and retires.*

Jos.

Humph!

Second Sec.

The affairs of England, sire, most urgent: Charles
The First has lost a battle that decides
One-half his realm; craves moneys, sire, and succour.

Louis.

He shall have both.—Eh, Baradas?

Bar.

Yes, sire.
O that dispatch!—my veins are fire!

Rich.

[*Feebly, but with great distinctness.*

My liege,
Forgive me; Charles's cause is lost: a man,
Named Cromwell, risen: a great man! your succour
Would fail; your loans be squandered! Pause: reflect.

Louis.

Reflect. Eh, Baradas?

Bar.

Reflect, sire.

Jos.

Humph!

Louis. [*Aside.*

I half repent! No successor to Richelieu.
Round me thrones totter; dynasties dissolve:
The soil he guards alone escapes the earthquake.

Jos.

Our star not yet eclipsed: you mark the king?
O had we the dispatch!

Rich.

Ah! Joseph!—child—
Would I could help thee!

Bar. [*To Secretary.*

Sir, fall back.

Second Sec.

But——

Bar.

Pshaw, sir!

[*Secretary retires.*

Third Sec.

The secret correspondence, sire, most urgent:
Accounts of spies; deserters; heretics;
Poisoners; schemes against yourself.

Louis.

Myself! most urgent!

[*Louis looks at this document eagerly. Enter François* C. *He passes behind the Cardinal's attendants, and, sheltered by them from the sight of Baradas, gives packet to Richelieu.*

Fran.

My lord!
I have not failed!

Rich.

Hush!

[*Opens packet and looks at its contents.*

Third Sec. [*To the king.*

Sire, the Spaniards
Have reinforced their army on the frontiers.
The Duc de Bouillon——

Rich.

Hold! [*Secretary retires.*] In this department, [*To Louis.*
A paper: here, sire, read yourself; then take
The count's advice in 't.

[*François takes packet and gives it to the king, who rises and goes* L. *At same time enter De Beringhen hastily, draws aside Baradas, and whispers to him.*

Bar.

[*Starting wildly away from De Beringhen.*
What! and reft it from thee?
Ha!—hold!

[*Tries to intercept delivery of the packet.*

Jos. [*To Baradas.*

Fall back, son. It is your turn now!

Bar.

Death!—the dispatch!

Louis. [*Reading.*

To Bouillon—and signed Orleans!
Baradas, too: league with our foes of Spain!
Capture the king!—Saints of heaven!
These are the men I loved!

[*Richelieu falls back, apparently fainting.*

Jos.

See to the Cardinal!

Bar.

He 's dying! and I yet shall dupe the king.

Louis. [*Rushing to Richelieu.*

Richelieu! Lord Cardinal! 't is I resign!
Reign thou!

Jos.

Alas! too late!—he faints!

Louis.

Reign, Richelieu!

Rich. [*Feebly.*

With absolute power?

Louis.

Most absolute! — O, live!
If not for me — for France!

Rich. [*With more animation.*

France!

Louis.

O! this treason!
The army — Orleans — Bouillon — Heaven! the Spaniard!
Where will they be next week?

[*As Louis turns toward the throne* C. *he encounters Baradas, kneeling; he motions him away and falls into his seat. Baradas rises and goes to* R.

Rich.

[*Starting up, and with force.*

There,—at my feet!

[*All show amazement at Richelieu's recovery.*

[*To First and Second Secretaries.*

Ere the clock strike — the envoys have their answer!

[*First and Second Secretaries exeunt.*

[*To Third Secretary, with a ring.*

This to De Chavigny: he knows the rest:
No need of parchment here: he must not halt
For sleep — for food. — In my name, — mine — he will
Arrest the Duc de Bouillon at the head
Of his army! — Ho! there, Count de Baradas,

[*Exit Third Secretary.*

Thou hast lost the stake! — Away with him![29]

[*Baradas draws sword; attempts to rush out; is arrested; throws down sword; bows to the king; and goes out guarded.*

Embrace your husband! [*To Julie.*

[*De Mauprat and Julie embrace.*

At last the old man blesses you!

Louis. [*Ironically.*

One moment makes a startling cure, lord Cardinal. [30]

Rich.

Yes, Sire, for in that moment there did pass
Into this withered frame the might of France!
My own dear France! I have thee yet: I have saved thee!
I clasp thee still! it was thy voice that called me
Back from the tomb! What mistress like our country?

Louis.

For Mauprat's pardon — well! But Julie,— Richelieu:
Leave me one thing to love!

Rich.

A subject's luxury:
Yet, if you must love something, sire — love me!

Louis.

[*Smiling, in spite of himself.*

Fair proxy for a young, fresh demoiselle!

Rich.

Your heart speaks for my clients: — kneel, my children,
And thank your king —

[*De Mauprat and Julie kneel. De Beringhen attempts to go out* C., *but is met by Joseph, who prevents him.*

Louis.

Rise — rise — be happy.

[*De Beringhen advances and speaks.*

De Ber. [*Falteringly.*

My lord — you are most happily recovered.

Rich.

But you are pale, dear Beringhen: this air
Suits not your delicate frame: I long have thought so:
Sleep not another night in Paris: go,—
Or else your precious life may be in danger.
Leave France, dear Beringhen. [*Orleans kneels to Louis.*

De Ber.

St. Denis travelled without his head!
Faith, I'm luckier than St. Denis!
I shall have time,
More than I asked for, to discuss the pâté.
[*Exit De Beringhen* C.

Rich. [*To Orleans.*

For you, repentance, absence and confession.
[*Orleans goes out* C. *To François, who kneels* L.
Never say fail again. Brave boy!
[*To Joseph* L.
He'll be—
A bishop first.

Jos.

Ah, Cardinal—

Rich.

Ah, Joseph.
[*To Louis, as De Mauprat and Julie converse apart.*
See, my liege, through plots and counterplots,
Through gain and loss, through glory and disgrace,
Along the plains where passionate discord rears
Eternal Babel, still the holy stream
Of human happiness glides on.

Louis.

And must we
Thank, for that also, our prime minister?

Rich.

No—let us own it:—there is One above
Sways the harmonious mystery of the world
Better than prime ministers.

CURTAIN.

RICHELIEU.

APPENDIX.

I.—The Drama and Character of Richelieu.

"RICHELIEU" stands in the front rank of romantic dramas. It tells a story of perspicuous simplicity, yet of enthralling interest. It presents clearly defined characters in natural relations to each other. It is vitalized by a steady dramatic movement, that increases in force and speed till it reaches an electrical climax and a beautiful culmination. It is adequately freighted — without being burdened — with situations that excite the imagination and touch the heart. Its spirit is sympathetic with virtue and gentleness, and, therefore, it captivates the general instincts of human nature. Above all, it is imaginative: it idealizes reality, and does not weary by presenting character and experience in the garb of prosy fact. Viewed as an ideal fabric, it is a drama without serious defect. Its salient blemish is one of literary art: that is to say, there is some tinsel in its language — an infusion of the paste-diamond element that is peculiar to most of Bulwer's works. But, little faults dwindle to nothing alongside of great merits. "Richelieu" is a play that constantly affords pleasure, by procuring and extolling — under deeply interesting and highly picturesque conditions of circumstance — the victory of good over evil. To have written a drama which thus makes its spectators happier and better for their seeing of it, is to have deserved the gratitude of the world. Considerate judgment will not dwell with censure upon the slight defect of an occasional tawdry line in a drama so radically powerful and brilliant.

The character of Richelieu, as it is herein portrayed, is higher and finer — as it ought to be — than that of the historic Cardinal. Richelieu was not, in actual life, the noble spirit that he is in this rosy fiction. The dramatist has depicted him as just, wise, kind, gentle, tolerant of weakness, sympathetic with virtue and innocence, superior to trials, steadfast in danger, sensitive to every sweet and poetic influence, and

only hostile and bitter when confronted with tyranny and wrong. The lower side of his nature, to be sure, is craft: but it is the craft of a philosopher and not of a trickster. When Richelieu uses indirection, it is such indirection as a deep knowledge of human nature and of worldly affairs has taught him to be essential in the conduct of life and the government of mankind. He never resorts to the skin of the fox till the skin of the lion has proved too short. In this drama he is shown in the expenditure of great powers upon small affairs — in the protection of a pair of young lovers, and in the defeat of a political intrigue: but these affairs are representative of what, in fact, were the prominent occupations of his life, and of what, equally in fact, are the universal occupations of the human race. Love, fame, wealth, power — these are at once the sources and the objects of all human action; and these are the elements upon which the force of Richelieu is seen to be expended. He is presented as a man of potent intellect and pure sensibility; and, notwithstanding his little vanities and the pettiness of the designs amid which he moves, his nature never declines from a stately and imperial individualism. The charm of the character grows out of this relation of it to its circumstances. Richelieu is the embodiment of virtuous power, shown in its grandest phase and function as the protector of innocent weakness. Seeing this aged priest, as he rises in the eye of the imagination, the observer instinctively feels, without pausing to reflect upon it, that this is a grand and noble old man, in whom the affections live an immortal life, who will be as true as steel to all that is good and pure, who wears with authentic right the royal garb of power, and who must as inevitably conquer and dominate as the sun must rise. W. W.

II.—Facts in the Life of Richelieu.

Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal, and Duc de Richelieu, was born, in Paris, in 1585. He was a member of a noble family, and in early youth was destined for the Army; but, upon his brother's resignation of the See of Luçon, he embraced an opportunity, then presented, to dedicate himself to the service of the Church. Having studied theology, at the college of Navarre, he was, in 1607, consecrated Bishop of Luçon. His earlier priestly endeavours were devoted to the conversion of the Huguenot Calvinists. In 1614 he was chosen Deputy to the State-General. His eloquence attracted notice, and he was presently named almoner to Marie de Medicis, widow of Henri IV. and mother to Louis XIII. A little later he became Secretary of State for foreign affairs and for war. He had enjoyed, for a time, at this period in his career,

the protection of Marshal d'Ancre, the favourite of the queen; but, in the commotion which attended the ruin and murder of that minister,—who was assassinated in the Louvre, April 24th, 1617,—the star of his fortunes suffered a temporary eclipse. He was banished to Luçon, and afterwards to Avignon, where he devoted his talents to the writing of theological treatises. But he was presently fortunate enough to effect a formal reconciliation between Louis XIII. and the queen; and in 1622, at the age of 37, he was created Cardinal. Two years later he became Prime Minister of France. His government was characterized by great power and splendour, and by marvellous success. He waged a deadly war against the Huguenots, and utterly subdued them. His siege and capture of Rochelle, in 1628, was an incident of this war. In 1635 he founded the French Academy. The chief work of his life was the maintenance of French supremacy in the affairs of continental Europe, by resistance to the encroachments of the [Austrian] House of Hapsburg. He built the Palais Cardinal, now called the Palais Royal,—which is, in part, the scene of Bulwer's drama,—and he rebuilt and beautified the College of Sorbonne. Several conspiracies were formed against the Cardinal; but his force of character, his sagacity, and his tremendous energy of purpose and action thwarted and subdued them all. The day on which Richelieu discomfited one of the most formidable of these plots—in which the king was a participant—was called the Day of Dupes; from the fact that all the persons concerned in it were duped by the sagacious and expeditious Cardinal. Richelieu died on the 4th of December, 1642. He had named Cardinal Mazarin as his successor. The student is referred to three lives of this famous statesman: by Aubrey, 1660; by John Le Clerc, 1718; and by Joy, 1806. W. W.

III.—The Author's Preface to Richelieu.

The administration of Cardinal Richelieu—whom, despite all his darker qualities, Voltaire and history justly consider the true architect of the French monarchy, and the great parent of French civilization—is characterized by features alike tragic and comic. A weak king, an ambitious favourite; a despicable conspiracy against the Minister, nearly always associated with a dangerous treason against the State;—these, with little variety of names and dates, constitute the eventful cycle through which, with a dazzling ease and an arrogant confidence, the great luminary fulfilled its destinies. Blent together, in startling contrast, we see the grandest achievements and the pettiest agents—the

spy — the mistress — the capuchin: — the destruction of feudalism — the humiliation of Austria — the dismemberment of Spain.

Richelieu himself is still what he was in his own day — a man of two characters. If, on the one hand, he is justly represented as inflexible and vindictive, crafty and unscrupulous; so, on the other, it cannot be denied that he was placed in times in which the long impunity of every license required stern examples; that he was beset by perils and intrigues which gave a certain excuse to the subtlest inventions of self-defense; that his ambition was inseparably connected with a passionate love for the glory of his country; and that, if he was her dictator, he was not less her benefactor. It has been fairly remarked, by the most impartial historians, that he was no less generous to merit than severe to crime; that, in the various departments of the State, the Army, and the Church, he selected and distinguished the ablest aspirants; that the wars which he conducted were, for the most part, essential to the preservation of France, and Europe itself, from the formidable encroachments of the Austrian House; that, in spite of those wars, the people were not oppressed with exorbitant imposts; and that he left the kingdom he had governed in a more flourishing and vigorous state than at any former period of the French history, or at the decease of Louis XIV.

The cabals formed against this great statesman were not carried on by the patriotism of public virtue nor the emulation of equal talent: they were but court struggles, in which the most worthless agents had recourse to the most desperate means. In each, as I have before observed, we see combined the twofold attempt to murder the minister and to betray the country. Such, then, are the agents, and such the designs with which truth, in the drama as in history, requires us to contrast the celebrated Cardinal; not disguising his foibles or his vices, but not unjust to the grander qualities — especially the love of country — by which they were often dignified, and, at times, redeemed.

The historical drama is the concentration of historical events. In the attempt to place upon the stage the picture of an era, that license with dates and details which poetry permits, and which the highest authorities in the drama of France herself have sanctioned, has been, though not unsparingly, indulged. The conspiracy of the Duc de Bouillon is, for instance, amalgamated with the *denouement* of the *Day of Dupes;* and circumstances connected with the treason of Cinq-Mars — whose brilliant youth and gloomy catastrophe tend to subvert poetic and historic justice, by seducing us to forget his base ingratitude and his perfidious apostacy — are identified with the fate of the earlier favourite, Baradas, whose

sudden rise and as sudden fall passed into a proverb. I ought to add that the noble romance of "Cinq-Mars" suggested one of the scenes in the fifth act; and that for the conception of some portion of the intrigue connected with De Mauprat and Julie, I am, with great alterations of incident, and considerable if not entire reconstruction of character, indebted to an early and admirable novel by the author of "Picciola."

London, March, 1839. E. L. B.

IV.—Historical Hints for Richelieu.

The Count de Soissons and the Duke de Bouillon had a good army, and they knew how to use it; and, for the greater certainty, resolved that, whilst this army should advance, they would assassinate the Cardinal, and stir up Paris to revolt. * * * The conspirators made a treaty with Spain to introduce her troops into France, and to throw everything into confusion by a Regency, which they thought would follow, and by which each one hoped to profit. * * * Richelieu had lost all his favour, and retained only the advantage of being necessary. His good fortune ordained, at the last, that the plot should be discovered, and that a copy of the treaty should fall into his hands.—Voltaire.

V.—Notes to Richelieu.

[1] Epistemon speaks of Cleopatra as a crier of onions in the other world. "Her kingdom produced exceeding good ones, in the opinion of the Israelites. Besides, of the two pearls of inestimable price which that queen owned, she, having caused her lover Antony to swallow one, dissolved in vinegar, intended to regale him with the second, if she had not been hindered. Perhaps it was by way of punishment for this prodigality that she is reduced to sell onions—that is, such fruit as the Latins call unions, a sort of onions—as well as pearls."—Rabelais.

[2] Daphne was loved and pursued by Apollo: when on the point of being overtaken by him she prayed for aid, and was instantly metamorphosed into a laurel tree.

[3] Olivares, Minister of Spain.

[4] In six months the King made Baradas "First Esquire," "First Gentleman of the Chamber," "Captain of St. Germain," and "Lieut. of the King in Champagne." In still less time he was turned out of all, and the ruins of his grandeur left him hardly enough to pay his debts. His sudden rise and as sudden fall passed into a proverb, so that we say, to signify a great fortune dissipated as soon as acquired, in common parlance—"The fortune of Baradas."—Anquetil.

5 Richelieu did, in fact, so thoroughly associate himself with the State, that, in cases where the extreme penalty of the law had been incurred, Le Clerc justly observes, he was more inexorable to those he had favoured—even to his own connections—than to other and more indifferent offenders. As in Venice (where the favourite aphorism was, "Venice first, Christianity next") so with Richelieu; the primary consideration was, "what will be best for the country?" On his death-bed he was asked if he forgave his enemies. He replied, "I never had any but those of the State." And this was true enough, for Richelieu and the State were one.

6 There are many anecdotes of the irony, often so terrible, in which Richelieu indulged. But he had a love for humour in its more hearty and genial shape. He would send for Boisrobert "to make him laugh," and grave ministers and magnates waited in the ante-room while the great Cardinal listened and responded to the sallies of the lively wit.

7 The Abbé Arnaud tells us that the queen was a little avenged on the Cardinal by the ill-success of the tragic comedy of "Mirame"—more than suspected to be his own, though presented to the world under the foster name of Desmarets. Its representation (says Pelisson), cost him 300,000 crowns. He was so transported out of himself by the performance that at one time he thrust his person half out of his box to show himself to the assembly; at another time he imposed silence on the audience that they might not lose the still more beautiful passages. He said afterwards to Desmarets: "After all, the French will never have any taste—they were not pleased with Mirame!"

8 Vialart remarque une chose qui peut expliquer la conduite de Richelieu en d'autres circonstances: c'est que les seigneurs à qui leur naissance ou leur mérite pouvoit permettre des prétensions, il avoit pour système, de leur accorder au de la même de leurs droits et de leur esperances, mais, aussi une fois comblés—si, au lieu de reconnoitre ses services ils se levoient contre lui, il les traitot misericorde.—ANQUETIL. See also the "Political Testament," and the "Memoires de Cardinal Richelieu," in Petitot's collection.

9 "*So much a fanatic, so much a knave, founder of the 'Religieuses' of Calvary, a maker of verses.*" Thus speaks Voltaire of Father Joseph. His talents and influence with Richelieu, grossly exaggerated in his own day, are now rightly estimated. He was, in fact, an indefatigable man; carrying with his enterprizes the activity, the suppleness, the stubbornness necessary to make them succeed.—ANQUETIL. He wrote a Latin poem called "La Turciade," in which he sought to excite the kingdoms of Christians against the Turks. But the inspiration of Tyrtæus was

denied to Father Joseph. His hair was red; but for fear of displeasing the King, who detested red hair, he used leaden combs, which gave it a dark color.

[10] Richelieu was commonly supposed, though I cannot say I find much evidence for it, to have been too presuming in an interview with Anne of Austria (the Queen), and to have bitterly resented the contempt she expressed for him.

[11] Richelieu not only employed the lowest, but would often consult men commonly esteemed the dullest. "He said that, in matters of the greatest importance, he had found, by experiment, that the least wise often suggested the best expedients."—LE CLERC.

[12] Both Richelieu and Joseph were originally intended for the profession of arms. Joseph had served, before he obeyed the spiritual inspiration to become a Capuchin. The death of his brother opened to Richelieu the Bishopric of Luçon; but his military propensities were as strong as his priestly ambition. I need scarcely add that the Cardinal, during his brilliant campaign in Italy, marched at the head of his troops, in complete armour. It was under his administration that occurred the last example of proclaiming war by the chivalric defiance of herald and cartel.

[13] Richelieu valued himself much on his personal activity; for his vanity was as universal as his ambition. A nobleman at the house of Grammont one day found him employed in *jumping*, and, with all the *savoir vivre* of a Frenchman and a courtier, offered to jump against him. He suffered the Cardinal to jump higher, and soon after found himself rewarded by an appointment. Yet, strangely enough, this vanity did not lead to a patronage injurious to the State; for never before in France was ability made so essential a requisite in promotion. He was lucky in finding the cleverest men among his adroitest flatterers.

[14] Voltaire openly charges Richelieu with being the lover of Marion de Lorme. The great poet of France, Victor Hugo, has sacrificed History to adorn her with qualities which certainly were not added to her personal charms. She was not less perfidious than beautiful. Le Clerc properly refutes the accusation of Voltaire against the discretion of Richelieu; and says, very justly, that, if the great minister had the frailties of human nature, he learnt how to veil them,—at least when he obtained the scarlet. In earlier life he had been prone to gallantries which a little prepossessed the King (who was formal and decorous, and threw a singular coldness into the few attachments he permitted to himself) against the aspiring intriguer. But these graver occupations died away in the engagement of higher pursuits or of darker passions.

[15] The guard attached to Richelieu's person was, in the first instance, fifty soldiers, afterward increased to two companies of cavalry and two hundred musketeers. Huguet is, therefore, to be considered merely as the lieutenant of a small detachment of this little army.

[16] Joseph's ambition was not, however, so moderate; he refused a bishopric, and desired the Cardinal's hat, for which favour Richelieu openly supplicated the Holy See, but contrived, somehow or other, never to effect it, although two ambassadors applied for it at Rome.

[17] The peculiar religion of Père Joseph may be illustrated by the following anecdote: An officer, whom he had dismissed upon an expedition into Germany, moved by conscience at the orders he had received, returned for further explanations, and found the Capuchin *disant sa masse*. He approached and whispered: "But, my father, if these people defend themselves——" "Kill all," (Qu'on tue tout,) answered the good father, continuing his devotion.

[18] Voltaire has a striking passage on the singular fate of Richelieu, recalled every hour from his gigantic schemes to frustrate some miserable cabal of the ante-room. Richelieu would often exclaim that "Six pieds de terre (as he called the king's cabinet) lui donnaient plus de peine que tout le reste de l'Europe." The death of Wallenstein, sacrificed by the Emperor Ferdinand, produced a most lively impression upon Richelieu. He found many traits of comparison between Ferdinand and Louis—Wallenstein and himself. In the memoirs—now regarded by the best authorities as written by his sanction, and in great part by himself—the great Frenchman bursts (when alluding to Wallenstein's murder) into a touching and pathetic anathema on the *misere de cette vie* of dependence on jealous and timid royalty, which he himself, while he wrote, sustained. It is worthy of remark, that it was precisely at the period of Wallenstein's death that Richelieu obtained from the king an augmentation of his guard.

[19] The fear and hatred which Richelieu generally inspired were not shared by his dependents and those about his person, who are said to have adored him. His servants looked upon him as the best of masters.—LE CLERC. In fact, although he was proud and choleric, he was at the same time no less affable and generous to those who served, than severe to those who opposed him.

[20] In common with his contemporaries, Richelieu was credulous as to the divinations of astrology. He was too fortunate a man not to be superstitious.

[21] Louis XIII. is said to have possessed some natural talents, and in earlier youth to have exhibited the germs of noble qualities; but a blight

seemed to have passed over his maturer life. Personally brave, but morally timid, always governed, whether by his mother or his minister, and always repining at the yoke,—the only affection amounting to a passion that he betrayed was for the sports of the field. Yet it was his crowning weakness (and this throws a kind of false interest over his character) to wish to be loved. He himself loved no one. He suffered the only woman who seems to have been attached to him to wither in a convent; he gave up favourite after favourite to exile or the block. When Richelieu died he said, coldly, "There is a great politician dead!" And when the ill-fated, but unprincipled Cinq-Mars, whom he called dear friend, was beheaded, he drew out his watch at the fatal hour, and said, with a smile: "I think at this moment the dear friend makes an ugly face." Nevertheless, his conscience at times (for he was devout and superstitious), made him gentle, and his pride and his honour would often, when least expected, rouse him into haughty but brief resistance to the despotism under which he lived.

[22] One of Richelieu's severest and least politic laws was that which made duelling a capital crime. Never was the punishment against the offence more relentlessly enforced; and never were duels so desperate and so numerous. The punishment of death must be evidently ineffectual so long as to refuse a duel is to be dishonoured, and so long as men hold the doctrine, however wrong, that it is better to part with the life that Heaven gave than with the honour that man makes. In fact, the greater the danger he incurred, the greater was the punctilio of that cavalier of the time in braving it.

[23] In his Memoirs Richelieu gives an amusing account of the insolence and arts of Baradas, and observes with indignant astonishment that the favourite was never weary of repeating to the king that he (Baradas) would have made just as great a minister as Richelieu. It is on the attachment of Baradas to La Cressias, a maid of honour to the Queen-Mother, of whom, according to Baradas, the King was enamoured also, that his love for the Julie de Mortemar of the play has been founded. The secret of Baradas' sudden and extraordinary influence with the King seems to rest in the personal adoration which he professed for Louis, with whom he affected all the jealousy of a lover, but whom he flattered with the ardent chivalry of a knight. Even after his disgrace he placed upon his banner, "Fiat voluntas tua."

[24] Of the haughty and rebuking tone which Richelieu assumed in his expostulations with the King, Montesquieu says: "He degraded the King, but he made illustrious the reign." But however proud and choleric in his disputes with Louis, the Cardinal did not always disdain

recourse to the arts of the courtier. Once, after an angry discussion with the King, in which, as usual, Richelieu got the better, Louis, as they quitted the palace together, said, rudely, "Go first—you are *indeed* the King of France." "If I pass out first," replied the minister, after a moment's hesitation, and with great adroitness, "it is only as the humblest of your servants;" and he took a *flambeau* from one of the pages, to light the king as he walked before him.

[25] According to the custom of Louis XIII., to cause the arrest of a person for a State crime, and to have him put to death, was very nearly the same thing.—LE CLERC.

[26] Like Cromwell and Rienzi, Richelieu appears to have been easily moved to tears. The Queen-Mother, who put the hardest interpretation on that humane weakness which is natural with very excitable temperaments, said: "He weeps whenever he chooses." It is recorded of him that when his affairs did not succeed he was cast down and frightened, and when he had obtained that which he desired he was proud and insulting.

[27] This alludes to Hildebrand (Gregory VII.), who carried his authority so far as to send legates into all the kingdoms of Europe to support his rights.

[28] When Popilius Lenas was sent as ambassador to Antiochus, King of Syria, whom the Roman Senate wished to restrain from hostilities against Egypt, he gave the King the letter of the Senate, which he read, and promised to take into consideration. Then, as Antiochus was about marching upon Alexandria, Popilius described with his cane a circle, in the sand, round the king, and ordered him not to stir out of it until he had given a decisive answer, at the risk of Rome's displeasure. This boldness so frightened Antiochus that he at once yielded to the demand.

[29] The passion of the drama requires this catastrophe for Baradas. He, however, survived his disgrace, though stripped of all his rapidly acquired fortunes; and the daring that belonged to his character won him distinction in foreign service. He returned to France after Richelieu's death, but never regained the same court influence. He had taken the vows of a Knight of Malta, and Louis made him a Prior.

[30] The sudden resuscitation of Richelieu (not to strain too much on the real passion which supports him in this scene) is in conformance with the more dissimulating part of his character. The extraordinary mobility of his countenance (latterly so death-like, save when the mind spoke in the features), always lent itself to stage effect of this nature. The Queen-Mother said of him that she had seen him one moment so feeble,

cast-down and "semi-mort," that he seemed on the point of giving up the ghost; and the next moment he would start up, full of animation and energy.

Ruelle, or Reuil, is a town of France, situated at the foot of Mont Valerien, about five miles from Paris.

Joseph, the Capuchin, was commonly called Father Joseph. He was a wily *intriguant*, and rendered much service to Richelieu. He died, of apoplexy, in 1638.

The author's dedication of "Richelieu," which, it may be assumed, he wished should accompany every edition of the play, is in the following words: "To the Marquis of Lansdowne, K. G., &c., &c., this drama is inscribed, in tribute to the talents which command, and the qualities which endear, respect."

The author of "Picciola" was Joseph Xavier Boniface Saintine. He was born at Paris, July 10th, 1798, and died there, January 21st, 1865. He published dramas, poems, and romances, a collection of philosophical stories, called "Jonathan, the Visionary," and a "History of the Wars in Italy." For "Picciola," his most popular work, he received the Monthyon Prize, in 1837. This novel passed through ten editions within eight years, and it has been translated into several languages.

The novel of "Cinq-Mars," which is mentioned in Bulwer's preface to "Richelieu" as, in part, the basis of the piece, was written by Alfred Victor, Count de Vigny, a native of France, born at Loche, in 1799. "Cinq-Mars" was published in 1826, and it has been translated into several languages. De Vigny won a bright distinction, both as a poet and a novelist. He wrote several plays, one of which illustrates the gloomy fate of Chatterton. De Vigny was a member of the French Academy. He died in 1863.

Henry Coiffier de Ruzè, Marquis de Cinq-Mars, was born in France, in 1620. At the age of 18 he was presented at the court of Louis XIII., by Cardinal Richelieu, and thereafter he soon became a favourite to the king. Ambition, commingled with hatred of Richelieu, presently led him to form a conspiracy against the Cardinal, in which the king himself, and his brother Gaston, Duc d'Orleans, participated. The plot miscarried: the Cardinal prevailed: and Cinq-Mars was beheaded, together with his friend the Councillor de Thou, at Lyons, September 12th, 1642.

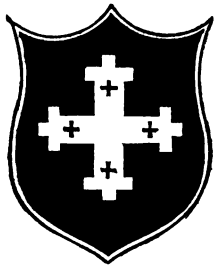
Tyrtæus, mentioned above, was a Greek poet of the 7th century, B. C. He was a deformed man, blind of one eye, and was a school-master. The Spartans, being at war with the Messenians, obeying an oracle,

asked the Athenians for a leader. The Athenians sent to them Tyrtæus, as the most unfit captain that could be chosen; but Tyrtæus so inspired the Spartans by his war-songs that they were victorious, and subdued their foes. The fragments of the poems of Tyrtæus are in Gaisford's "Poetæ Minores Greci," translated into English verse by Polwhele, 1786–'92.

The Capuchins were a body of friars, of the order of St. Francis, instituted by Matteo Baschi, in 1525, and established under Pope Clement VII., in 1529. They were at first called Friars Hermits Minor. Their order was confirmed, in 1536, by Pope Paul III., who named them Capuchins of the Order of Friars Minor. Their name was derived from the Latin designation [*Caputium*] of the cowl that they wore. This head-gear was shaped like a sugar-loaf. The Capuchins were introduced into France in 1573–'74.

Marie de Medicis, the Queen-mother, was born at Florence, in 1573; made mischief for everybody, all her days; was exiled by Richelieu; and died, at Cologne, in destitution, in 1642. Louis XIII., her son, was born at Fontainebleu, September 27th, 1601; came to the throne of France in 1610; and died at St. Germaine, May 14th, 1643.

Many of the foregoing notes are by the author. Several of them have been shortened and modified, and several useful new ones have been introduced. There are, in the original, other notes, which relate to passages not included in this version of the drama.—W. W.



THE FOOL'S REVENGE

VOL. III

Preface.

✣

THE tragedy of The Fool's Revenge—one of the best works of the English dramatist and poet, Tom Taylor—was first acted in 1859, at Sadler's Wells Theatre, in London. Samuel Phelps—a tragedian much admired on the English stage, equally as a scholar and an artist—represented Bertuccio. In April, 1864, Edwin Booth brought out this tragedy at Niblo's Theatre, New-York,—then under the management of William Wheatley. His choice of the text, his stage-directions, and certain alterations of the piece, made by him, are seen in the present reprint. An important change, which it is hoped will be thought an improvement, has been made at the end—where, now, Bertuccio dies, while Dell' Aquila, as a matter of poetic justice, is rewarded with the hand of Fiordelisa. An effort has also been made, by re-arrangement of stage business, to sharpen and heighten the effect of the final catastrophe. The Author's Preface will be found on another page. He defines his indebtedness to Victor Hugo's "Le Roi s'Amuse," which is slight. The subject of that drama, it will be remembered, is also treated in the opera of "Rigoletto." An Appendix to this volume presents a sketch of the Author, remarks on the costume for this piece, thoughts on deformity as an element in art, and the Editor's views of this tragedy. "The Fool's Revenge" is to be considered as, almost exclusively, a work of the imagi-

nation. History enters but slightly into its texture. The depravity and the gaily profligate manners of the corrupt, luxurious little Italian courts of the fifteenth century are, however, shadowed forth in its incidents and text. Bentivoglio is an historic name. John Bentivoglio was Lord of Bologna, from about 1439 to 1508. Cæsar Borgia, to whom there is an allusion in the text, died in 1507. The action of this piece is assigned to 1488. Venice had then passed the meridian of her greatness, and all Italy was broken into petty states, and had become the prey of plotting priests and turbulent nobles. The Middle Ages were coming to an end. Louis XI. had just finished his sanguinary reign in France. Henry VII.—Richard having fallen at Bosworth field—was on the throne of England. The crowns of Aragon and Castile had been united, and Spain, under Ferdinand and Isabella, had become a great power. Thought upon these and other actual surroundings of the time which it is sought to illustrate will, of course, help to make this old historic period more a reality to the imagination of the student. Bertuccio, an impossibility now, does not seem out of place in that age of cruelty, splendour, romance, passion, change, and general upheaval and strife. The character is, in some of its aspects, repulsive; but it is redeemed from the category of utterly abhorrent dramatic creations by its vein of tenderness, and by the pathos of the experience which is felt to have distorted its virtue, and turned its gentleness to insane fury.

W. W.

New-York, October 27th, 1878.

"*Good Thersites, come in and rail.*"—SHAKESPEARE.

"*Deformity is daring.*
It is its essence to o'ertake mankind,
By heart and soul, and make itself the equal—
Ay, the superior of the rest."—BYRON.

"*No—let the eagle change his plume,*
The leaf its hue, the flower its bloom:
But ties around this heart were spun
That could not, would not, be undone."—CAMPBELL.

"*The smile upon her bonnie cheek*
Was sweeter than the bee;
Her voice excelled the birdie's sang
Upon the birchen tree."
OLD SCOTTISH BALLAD.

"*For from that day, the day of my dishonour,*
From that day have I cursed the rising sun,
Which never failed to tell me of my shame * * *
Yet on I toiled, and groaned for an occasion
Of ample vengeance."—YOUNG.

"*How like a fawn—*
Yet statelier. Hark! no sound, however soft,
Nor gentlest echo, telleth when she treads;
But every motion of her shape doth seem
Hallowed by silence."
BARRY CORNWALL.

"*And if there be a human tear*
From passion's dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek
It would not stain an angel's cheek;
T'is that which pious fathers shed,
Upon a duteous daughter's head."—SCOTT.

"*And at evening evermore,*
In a chapel on the shore,
Shall the chaunters, sad and saintly,
Yellow tapers burning faintly,
Doleful masses chaunt for thee,
Miserere Domine!"
COLERIDGE.

Author's Preface to The Fool's Revenge.

✠

THIS drama is in no sense a translation, and ought not, I think, in fairness, to be called even an adaptation of Victor Hugo's fine play, "Le Roi s' Amuse." It originated in a request made to me by one of our most popular actors, to turn the libretto of "Rigoletto" into a play, as he wished to act the part of the jester. On looking at Victor Hugo's drama, with this object, I found so much in it that seemed to me inadmissible on our stage; so much, besides, that was wanting in dramatic motive and cohesion, and—I say it in all humility—so much that was defective in that central secret of stage effect, climax, that I determined to take the situation of the jester and his daughter, and to recast in my own way the incidents in which their story was invested. The death of Galeotto Manfredi at the hands of his wife, Francesca Bentivoglio, is historical. It seemed to me that the atmosphere of a petty Italian court of the Fifteenth Century was well suited, as a medium, for presenting the jester's wrongs, his rooted purpose of revenge, and the miscarriage of that purpose. I should not have thought it necessary to say thus much, had not some of the newspaper critics talked of my work as a simple translation of Victor Hugo's drama, while others described it, more contemptuously, as a mere *rifaciamento* of Verdi's libretto. Those who will take the trouble to compare my work with either of its alleged originals will see that my play is neither translation nor *rifaciamento*. The motives of Bertuccio, the machinery by which his revenge is diverted from its intended channel, and the action in the court subsequent to the carrying off of his daughter, are my own, and I conceive that these features give me the fullest right to call "The Fool's Revenge" a new play, even if the use of Victor Hugo's "Triboulet" and "Blanche" disentitle it to the epithet original—which is matter of opinion.

For the admirable manner in which the drama is mounted and represented at Sadler's Wells, and for the peculiarly powerful impersonation of Bertuccio, I owe all gratitude to Mr. Phelps. I must extend that feeling also to Miss Heath, Miss Atkinson, and the rest of the Sadler's Wells company, engaged in the representation of "The Fool's Revenge."

TOM TAYLOR.

Persons Represented.

✠

GALEOTTO MANFREDI, *Duke of Faenza.*

GUIDO MALATESTA, *an old Military Commander and Nobleman.*

BALDASSARE TORELLI,
GIAN MARIA ORDELAFFI, } *Noblemen and Courtiers.*

BERNARDO ASCOLTI, *a Florentine Ambassador.*

BERTUCCIO, *a Jester.*

SERAFINO DELL'AQUILA, *a Poet.*

ASCANIO, *a Page to Francesca.*

GINEVRA, *Wife to Malatesta.*

FRANCESCA BENTIVOGLIO, *Wife to Manfredi, and Duchess of Faenza.*

FIORDELISA, *Daughter to Bertuccio.*

BRIGITTA, *Servant to Bertuccio.*

LORDS, LADIES, CHAMBERLAINS, PAGES and ATTENDANTS.

Place and Time.

✠

SCENE.—*Faenza, in Italy.*

PERIOD.—*End of the fifteenth century* [*1488*].

TIME OF ACTION.—*A little less than forty-eight hours.*

THE FOOL'S REVENGE.

✠

Act First.

FIRST NIGHT.

Scene First. FAENZA. THE GARDENS OF MANFREDI'S PALACE. TERRACE AT BACK. GARDEN, ETC., ILLUMINATED. FESTIVAL MUSIC AT RISE OF CURTAIN. MOONLIGHT OVER THE WHOLE SCENE. NOBLES AND LADIES MOVE THROUGH THE GARDENS. TORELLI AND ORDELAFFI DISCOVERED. ENTER, TO THEM, ASCOLTI.

Tor.

Messer Bernardo, you shall judge between us:
Is Ordelaffi's, here, a feasting face?
I say 't is fitter for a funeral.

Asc.

An Ordelaffi scarce can love the feast
That greets Octavian Riario,
Lord of Forlì and Imola. [*Music ceases.*

Ord.

Because our line were masters there of old,
Till they were fools enough to get pulled down!
I was born to no lordship but my sword.
Thanks to my stout, black bands, I look to win
New titles, and so grieve not over lost ones.

My glove upon 't! I 'll prove a lighter dancer,
A lustier wooer, and a deeper drinker,
Than e'er a landed lordling of you all.
Is it a wager?

[*Manfredi and Ginevra pass across the terrace, at back. Then Malatesta appears, watching them. They pass off* R.

Tor.

My hand to that! There 's Malatesta's wife,
The fair Ginevra. Let 's try lucks with her?

Asc.

Ware hawk! Grey Guido 's an old-fashioned husband;
Look how he glares upon the Lord Manfredi:
Each of his soft words to the fair Ginevra
Is a dagger in the old fool's heart.

Ord.

Sublime! ripe sixty wedded to sixteen,
And thinks to shut the foxes from his grapes!

Tor.

The duke, too, for his rival! Poor old man!

Asc.

Let the duke look to it. Ginevra's smiles
May breed him worse foes than Count Malatesta.
The duchess! [*Whispering.*

Tor.

Faith, 't is ill rousing Bentivoglio blood.

Ord.

And she 's as jealous as her own pet greyhound.

Tor.

And sharper in the teeth. I wonder much
She leaves Faenza, knowing her Manfredi
So general a lover.

Asc.

She leaves Faenza?

Tor.

So they say: to-morrow
Rides to Bologna, to her grim old father,
Giovanni Bentivoglio.

Asc.

To complain
Of her hot-blooded husband?

Tor.

Nay, I know not:
Enough, she goes, and—fair dame as she is—
A murrain go with her, say I. There never
Was good time in Faenza, since she came
To spoil sport with her jealousy. Manfredi
Will be himself again when she is hence. [*Music pp.*

Asc.
Hush! here she comes —— } [*Looking off* R. U. E.
Ord.

With that misshapen imp,
Bertuccio. Gibing devil! I shall thrust
My dagger down his throat, one of these days!

Tor.

Call him a jester? he laughs vitriol.

Asc.

Spares nothing; cracks his random scurril quips
Upon my master, great Lorenzo's self.

Ord.

Do the knave justice, he 's a king of tongue-fence;
Not a weak joint in all our armours round
But he knows and can hit. Confound the rogue!
I 'm blistered still from a word-basting he
Gave me but yesterday. Would we were quits!

Tor.

Wait! I 've a rod in pickle that shall flay
The tough hide off his hump. A rare revenge!

Asc.

They 're here: avoid!

[*Ascolti, Ordelaffi, and Torelli mingle with the guests, and exeunt* L. U. E.—*Re-enter Manfredi, and Ginevra, followed by Malatesta* C.—*They cross and disappear.—Enter Francesca, followed by Bertuccio.*

Fran.

[*Looking off, as if watching, and aside.*

Still with her!
Changing hot palms and long looks!
Hers for the dance, hers at the feast, all hers!
Nothing for me but shallow courtesies,
And hollow coin of compliment that leaves
The craving heart as empty as a beggar
Bemocked with counters!

[*Music, forte, until Bertuccio speaks.*

Ber.

[*Counting on his fingers and looking at the moon.*

Moon—Manfredi—moon!

Fran.

Ha, knave!

Ber.

By your leave, Monna Cesca, I am cyphering.

[*Note.—Monna is diminutive for Madonna, Dame, or Mistress, and Cesca is diminutive for Francesca.*

Fran.

Some fool's sum?

Ber.

Yes; running your husband's changes
Against the moon's. Manfredi has it hollow.
It comes out ten new loves 'gainst five new moons!

Fran.

Where do I stand?

Ber.

First of the ten; your moon was a whole honey one;
Excluding that, it 's nine loves to four moons.

Fran.

You pity me, Bertuccio?

Ber.

Not a whit;
I pity sparrows, but not sparrow-hawks.

Fran.

I read your riddle,—I am strong enough
To right my own wrongs. So I am, while here.

Ber.

Then stay!

Fran.

My father at Bologna looks for me.

Ber.

Then go!

Fran.

And leave him here—with her—both free,
And not a friend that I can trust to watch
And give me due report how things go 'twixt them.
Had I one friend——

Ber.

You have Bertuccio.

Fran.

Men call you faithless, bitter, loving wrong
For wrong's sake, Duke Manfredi's worst councillor,
Still prompting him to evil.

Ber.

How folks flatter!

Fran.

How, then, am I to trust you?

Ber.

Monna Cesca,
You know the wild beasts that your husband keeps
Down in the castle fosse? There 's a she-leopard
I lie and gaze at by the hour together;
So sleek, so graceful, and so dangerous!
I long to see her let loose on a man.
Trust me to draw the bolt, and loose my leopard.

Fran.

I 'll trust your love of mischief, not of me.

Ber.

That 's safest!

Fran.

I must know how fares this fancy
Of Duke Manfredi for yon pale Ginevra:
Mark him and her, their meetings, communings;
I know you 're private with my lord.

Ber.

He trusts me.

Fran. [*Giving ring.*

Here! take my ring: your letters sealed with this,
My page Ascanio will bring me straight;
'T is but three hours' hard riding—and in six
I 'm here again. Mark! write not on suspicion:

Let evil thought ripen to evil act;
That in the full flush of their guilty joys
I may strike sudden and strike home.
No Bentivoglio pardons!

Ber.

Have a care!
Faenza is Manfredi's. These court-flies,
Who flutter in the sunshine of his favour,
Have stings: the pudding-headed citizens
Love his free ways: he leaves their wives alone:
You play your own head, touching his.

Fran.

Give me my vengeance: then come what come may.
[*Music p.*
Enough; I am resolved. Now for the dance!
They shall not see a cloud upon my brow,
Though my heart ache and burn. I can smile too,
On him and her. Bertuccio, remember!
[*Exit Francesca* L. U. E.

Ber. [*Looking at the ring.*

A blood-stone—apt reminder! Does she think
That none but she has wrongs? That none but she
Means to revenge them? What? "No Bentivoglio
Pardons." There is a certain vile Bertuccio,
A twisted, withered, hunchbacked, court buffoon,
A thing to make mirth, and to be made mirth of,
A something betwixt ape and man, that claims
To run in couples with your ladyship.
You hunt Manfredi, I hunt Malatesta:
Let 's try which of the two has sharper fangs.

[*Manfredi and Ginevra re-appear in the background* C., *still followed by Malatesta.*

The duke and Malatesta's wife! [*Retires.*

[*Manfredi and Ginevra come forward, Malatesta watching them.*

Man.

Not yet! but one more round! The feast is blank
For me when you are gone. The flowers lack perfume,
Missing your fragrant breath. The music sounds
Harsh and untunable, when your sweet voice
Makes no more under-melody. O, stay! [*Music ceases.*

Gin.

I am summoned, sir; my husband waits for me.

Man. [*Aside.*

What spoil-sports are these husbands
And these wives!
Per Bacco! I could wish Count Malatesta
Would lend my duchess escort to Bologna,
So we were both well rid. [*Malatesta beckons to Ginevra.*

Gin.

Your pardon, sir,
My husband beckons. It is I, not you,
Must bear his moods to-night. I dare not stay.

Man.

I would not bring a cloud to your fair brow
For all Faenza. Fare you well, sweet lady!
[*He leads her to Malatesta.*
I render up your jewel, Malatesta;
See that you guard it as befits its price.

Mal.

Trust me for that, my lord.

Man. [*To Ginevra.*

Sweet dreams wait on you.

Mal. [*Aside.*

This night sees her safe past Faenza's walls.

[*Exeunt Malatesta and Ginevra* R. 1. E.

Man. [*Sits* R.

A peerless lady!

Ber.

[*Comes forward, and crouches at Manfredi's feet.*

And a churlish spouse!

Man.

Bertuccio!

Ber.

"At your elbow, sir," quoth Satanus.

Man.

Come, fool, let 's rail at husbands.

Ber.

Shall I call
Your wife to help us?

Man.

Out on thee, screech-owl!

[*Kicks Bertuccio out of his way, rises, and crosses to* L.

Just when I felt my chains about to fall
Thou mind'st me of my jailer. Thank the saints,
I shall be free to-morrow, for a while.
I 'm thirsty to employ my liberty.
Come, my familiar, help me to some mischief;
Some pleasant deviltry, with just the spice
Of sin to make the enjoyment exquisite.

Ber.

Let 's see; throat-cutting 's pleasant, but that 's stale;
Plotting has savour in it, but 't is too tedious:
Say, a campaign with Ordelaffi's band,
So you may feed all the seven sins at once.

Man.

Out, barren hound! thy wits are growing dull.

[*Strikes Bertuccio.*

Ber.

A man can't always be finding out new sins;
Think, they 're as hard to hit on as new pleasures.
My head on 't, Alexander had not run
So wide a round of pleasures as you of sins;
And yet he offered kingdoms for a new one.
You must invoke Asmodeus, not Beelzebub.

Man.

What 's he?

Ber.

The devil specially charged with love;
He has more work than all the infernal legion.
There 's Malatesta's wife; she 's young, and fair,
And good, they say; rare matter for sin there,
Though 't is the oldest of them all.

Man.

But show me
How to win her! She 's cold as she is fair.
I have spent enough sweet speech to have softened stone,
And all in vain.

Ber.

The monks say Hannibal
Melted the rocks with vinegar, not sugar.

Man.

But she is adamant.

Ber.

When all else fails
You 've still force to fall back on. Carry her off,
From under Guido's grizzled beard.

Man.

By Bacchus,
There 's mettle in thy counsel, knave! I 'll think on 't.
[*Crosses to* R. *and sits.*

Ber.

It needs no brains, neither; only strong hands
And hard hearts. Here come both.

[*Enter Torelli, Ascolti, and Ordelaffi* L. U. E.

Man.

What say you, gentlemen: may I trust your arms?

Tor.

They 're yours in any quarrel.

Asc.

So are mine!

Ord.

And mine!

Ber.

One at a time. You said "arms;"—of Torelli
You should ask legs; his did such famous service
In carrying him out of danger at Sarzana,
I think they may be trusted. [*All laugh, except Torelli.*

Tor.

Scurril knave;
But I 'll be even with thee.

Ber.

That were pity.
A hump would be a sore disfigurement
Upon a back that you 're so fond of showing!

Asc.

This rogue needs gagging.

Ber.

What, for speaking truth?
I cry you mercy, I forgot how ugly
It must sound to a Florentine Ambassador.

[*All laugh except Ascolti.*

Man.

Well thrust, Bertuccio!

Ord.

My lord, my lord!
The slave is paid to find us wit ——

Ber.

Hold there.
No man is bound to impossibilities,
'T is a known maxim of the Roman law;
How then can I find wit for Ordelaffi?
[*All laugh but Ordelaffi.*
But look, there 's Serafino, big with a sonnet:
[*Dell' Aquila passes across the terrace* C. *and disappears.*
I must help him to reason for his rhymes —— [*Going* C.

Man.

Stay!

Ber.

Not I! You 're for finding out new sins;
With three such councillors, I am superfluous.
[*The three lords cross to Manfredi* R.
The evil seed is sown; 't will grow, 't will grow. [*Aside.*
[*Exit Bertuccio* C.

Tor.

Toad!

Asc.

Foul-mouthed scoffer!

Ord.

Warped in wit and limb!

Asc.

My lord, you give your monkey too much rope.

Man.

Nay, give the devil his due; if he hits hard,
He hits impartially. I take my share
Of buffets with the rest. Best cure the smart

By laughing at your neighbour that smarts worse.
But, about this business, where your arms may help me.

Asc.

Is it an enemy to be silenced?

Ord.

A castle
To be surprised? A merchant to be squeezed?

Asc.

Or aught in which ducats or brains of Florence
Can help?

Man.

No. Who was queen of the feast to-night?
In your skilled judgment, Messer Gian Maria?

Ord.

I ought to say your duchess, fair Francesca;
But, if another tongue had asked the question——

Man.

Speak out thy honest judgment!

Ord.

Not a lady
In all Faenza 's worthy to compare
With proud Ginevra Malatesta!

Tor.

I think I know a fairer,— but no matter!

Man.

I hold with Ordelaffi. I have mounted
Ginevra's colours in my cap, and heart;
But she 's too proud, or fearful of old Guido,
To smile upon my suit. 'T is the first time
I 've found so coy a dame.

Asc.

Trust one who knows them,
The coyest are not always chastest.

Man.

How say you, if I spared her shame of yielding
By a night escalade?

Ord. [*Shaking his head.*

Carry her off?
A Malatesta! Were it an enemy's town ——

Man.

Hear him! how modestly he talks! Why, man,
Since when shrank'st thou from climbing balconies,
And forcing doors without an invitation?

Ord.

O, citizens', I grant you; but a noble's,
One of ourselves ——

Asc.

Remember, Malatesta
Is cousin to the old lord of Ceséna:
The affair might breed a feud, and so let in
The sly Venetian.

Tor.

Be advised, my lord;
If you must breathe your new-fledged liberty,
Try safer game. Old Malatesta's horns
Might prove too sharp for pastime.

Man.

Out, you faint hearts,
Do you fall off? Then, by Saint Francis' bones,
I and Bertuccio will adventure it.

Tor.

Bertuccio! My jewel to his hump,
'T was he put this mad frolic in your head.

Man.

And if it were? At least he 'll stand by me.
Perchance his wits may be worth all your brawn.

Asc.

Here comes one who may claim to be consulted
Upon this business. [*Enter Malatesta* R. 1. E.

Man.

Guido Malatesta!
Why, how now, count? You left our feast so soon,
I thought you i' the sheets this good half hour.

Mal.

I had forgot my duty to your lordship;
So now repair my lack of courtesy:
To-morrow I purpose riding to Ceséna,
And would not go without due leave-taking.

Man. [*Aside.*

This jumps well with my project.
What, to-morrow! [*To Malatesta.*
You ride alone?

Mal.

No, with my wife.

Man.

The devil! [*Aside.*
Why this is sudden; she spoke no word of this
[*To Malatesta.*
To-night.

Mal.

Tush! women know not their own minds;
How should they know their husbands'?

Man.

But your reason?

Mal.

Your air here in Faenza is too warm,
And scarce so pure as fits my wife's complexion;
She 'll be better in my castle at Ceséna;
The walls are five feet thick, and from the platform
There 's a rare view. She 'll need no exercise.

Man.

The jailer! [*Aside*
But what says the lady's will? [*To Malatesta.*

Mal.

I never ask that; and so 'scape all risk
Of finding it run counter to my own.

Man.

Faenza will have great miss of you both.

Mal.

O, fear not, I 'll return; your wine 's too good
To be left lightly. I 'll be back to-morrow,
Before the gates are shut. Meanwhile accept
This leave-taking by proxy from my wife.

Man.

Not so; I must exchange farewell with her
To-morrow.

Mal.

We shall start an hour ere dawn;
You 'll scarce be stirring.

Man.

Plague upon the churl! [*Aside.*
He meets me at all points. At least, I hope,
This absence of your wife will not be long;
My duchess cannot spare her.
Saints forgive me! [*Aside.*

Mal.

When your fair lady wants her, she can send:
I 'll answer for her coming on that summons.
Good-night, sweet lords.
How crest-fallen he looks! [*Aside.*
Mass! 't is ill cozening an old campaigner!
Did he think I had forgot to guard my baggage?
[*Exit Malatesta.*

Man.

A murrain go with him! May the horse stumble
That carries him, and break his old bull-neck!
O, this is cruel; with my hand stretched out
To have to draw 't back empty. I could curse!

Tor.

What if I helped you to a substitute
For coy Ginevra? passing her in beauty:
One, too, whose conquest puts no crown to risk,
And helps withal a notable requital
That we all owe Bertuccio, you included.

Man.

What mean you?

Tor.

Guess what 's happened to Bertuccio.

Ord.

He 's grown good-natured.

Asc.

Or has dropped his hump.

Man.

He has found a monkey uglier than himself.

Tor.

No, something stranger than all these would be,
If they had happened. He has found a mistress!
[*All laugh.*

Man.

My lady's pet baboon? Bertuccio
Graced with a mistress! [*He laughs.*

Asc.

She is blind, of course?

Ord.

And has a hump, I hope, to match his own?

Man.

Bertuccio with a mistress! why the rogue
Ne'er yet made joke so monstrous, or so pleasant.
[*All laugh.*

Tor.

Laugh as you please, sirs; on my knightly faith,
He has a mistress, and a rare one too.
Nay, if you doubt my word — here comes Dell' Aquila,
He knows as well as I.

Man.

We 'll question him.
[*Enter Serafino Dell' Aquila* C.

Man.

Good even to my poet — you walk late!

Aqu. [*Pointing to the moon.*

I tend my mistress: poets and lunatics,
You know, are her liege subjects.

Man.

They are happy.

Aqu.

Why?

Man.

They have a new mistress every month.
But jesters can find mistresses, it seems,
As well as poets. There 's Torelli swears
Bertuccio has one, and that you know it.

Aqu.

I know he has a rare maid, close mewed up,
But whether wife or daughter ——

Man.

Tell not me!
A mistress for a thousand! But what of her?
How did you find her out?

Aqu.

'T was some weeks since,
Attending vespers in your house's chapel,
At San Costanza, I beheld a maiden
Kneeling before that picture of our lady,
By Fra Filippo: — O, so fair, so rapt
In her pure passionate prayers! — I tell you, sirs,
I was nigh going on my knees beside her,
And asking for an interest in her orisons:
Such eyes! and such a brow — crowned with such wreaths
Of glossy hair! and then, her cheeks of snow,
Flushed tenderly, as when the sunlight strikes
Upon an evening Alp! and over all,
A grace of maiden modesty that lay
More still and snowy round her than the folds
Of her white veil! And when she rose I rose
And followed her, like one drawn by a charm,
To a mean house, where entering, she was lost.

Man.

She was alone?

Aqu.

Only a shrewish servant
That saw her to the church, and saw her home.

Man.

A most weak wolf-dog for so choice a lamb!

Aqu.

Methought, my lord, she needed no more guard
Than the innocence that sat, dove-like, in her eyes,

That shaped the folding of her delicate hands,
And timed the movement of her gentle feet.

Man.

You spoke to her?

Aqu.

I dared not; some strange shame
Put weight upon my tongue. I only watched her,
And sometimes heard her speak. That was enough.

Man.

Poets are easy satisfied. Well, you watched?

Aqu.

And then I found that I was not alone
Upon my nightly post: there were two more;
One stayed outside, like me, and one went in.

Tor.

True to the letter! I was the outsider,
The third, and luckiest, was Bertuccio!

Man.

The hump-backed hypocrite!

Ord.

The owl that screeched
The loudest against women!

Asc.

But, is 't certain
That 't was Bertuccio?

Tor.

I can swear to that.

Aqu.

And I.

Asc.

How did you know him?

Tor.

By his hump,
His gait; who could mistake that crab-like walk?
I could have knocked my head against the wall
To think I had been fool enough to trust
A woman's looks for once. Dell' Aquila,
I know, holds other faith about the sex.

Aqu.

I would stake life upon her purity;
Yet, 't is past doubt Bertuccio is the man,
The ugly jailer of this prisoned bird.

Man.

Why that 's enough to make it a mere duty
To break her prison-house, and shift her keeping
To fitter hands,—say mine. I 'm lord of the town;
None else has right of prison here but I.

Aqu.

What would you do?

Man.

First see if she bears out
Your picture, Serafino; if she do,
Be sure I will not wait outside to mark
Her shadow. Shadows may suit poets;
I want substance.

Tor.

She is for Bertuccio's master,
Not for Bertuccio. When shall it be?

Man.

To-morrow
I 'm a free man! Meet me at midnight, here.

Aqu.

You would not harm her? Only see her face,
You will not have the heart to do her wrong.

Man.

What call you "wrong"? To save so choice a creature
From such a guardian as Bertuccio?
He would have prompted me to play the robber
Of Malatesta's pearl: let him guard his own.
[*Aquila goes up stage.*

Ord.

If he resists, we 'll knock him o'er the sconce;
Let me have that part of the business.

Man.

Nay, I 'd not have the rascal harmed; he 's bitter,
But shrewedly witty, and he makes me laugh.
No, spare me my buffoon: who does him harm,
Shall answer it to me.

Tor.

'T were a rare plot to make the knave believe
Our scheme still held against old Malatesta:
That his Ginevra was the game we followed.

Ord.

So give him a rendezvous a mile away;
And, while he waits our coming, to break open
The mew where he keeps close his tercel gentle.

Asc. [*Aside to Manfredi.*

Ne'er trust a poet. What if he betray us?

Man.

He 's truth itself; and where he gives his faith,
'T is better than a bond of your Lorenzo's.

Asc.

Swear him to secrecy.

Man.

[*To Dell' Aquila, who advances.*

Your hand upon it.
You 'll not spoil our sport, by breaking to Bertuccio
What we intend?

Aqu.

But think, O, think, my lord,
What if this were no mistress; as, if looks
Have privilege to reveal the soul, she is none?

Man.

Mistress, or maid, man, I will not be baulked;
'T is for her good. I know the sex; she pines
In her captivity: I 'll find a cage
More fitting such a bird as you 've described.
Your hand on 't: not a whisper to Bertuccio!

Aqu.

You force me. There 's my hand: I will not speak
A word to him.

Man. [*Taking his hand.*

That 's like a trusty liegeman
Of blind Lord Cupid.
Hark, a word with you! [*To the others. They retire* C.

Aqu. [*Aside.*

I 'll save her from this wrong, or lose myself.
What tie there is betwixt these two I know not;
How one so fair and seeming gentle 's linked
With one so foul and bitter,— a buffoon,
Who makes his vile vocation viler still,
By prompting to the evil that he mocks.
But I will 'gage my life that she is pure.
And still shall be so, if my aid avail!

[*Exit* L. 1. E.

Man.

[*Advancing with his companions.*

But how to get sight of Bertuccio's jewel?
I 'd see before I 'd seize.

Tor.

Trust me for that!
I am no poet. When I found the damsel
Admitted such a gallant as Bertuccio,
I thought it time to press my suit; and so
Accosted her on her way from San Costanza ——

Man.

She listened?

Tor.

Long enough—the little fool—
To learn my meaning; then she flushed, and fled;
I followed, when, as the foul fiend would have it,
Ginevra Malatesta, coming by
From vespers with her train, sheltered the pigeon,
And spoiled my chase.

Man.

You did not give it up?

Tor.

I changed my plan; the mistress being coy,
I spread my net to catch the maid. O, lord!
The veriest Gorgon! You might swear none e'er
Had given her chase before! no coyness there;
A small expense of oaths and coin sufficed
To make her think herself a misprized Venus,
And me the most discriminating wooer
In all Faenza. 'T will not need much art
For me to win an entrance to the house;
And when I 'm in, it shall go hard, my lord,
But I 'll find means to get you access too.

Man.

About it straight; at dusk to-morrow night
Be here, armed, masked and cloaked.

Ord.

While poor Bertuccio
Awaits our coming near San Stefano!
A stone's throw from the casa Malatesta.

Asc.

He 's here!

[*Enter Bertuccio*, C.—*Manfredi in the centre, Ascolti at his left, Torelli at his right; Ordelaffi* R. *corner.*

Ber.

Not yet a-bed!
Since when were the fiend's eggs so hard to hatch?
I left a pleasant little germ of sin
Some half an hour since: it should be full-grown
By this time. Is it?

Man.

Winged, and hoofed, and tailed.
If proud Ginevra Malatesta sleep
To-morrow night beneath old Guido's roof,
Then call me a snow-water-blooded shaveling.

Ber.

Ha! 'T is resolved, then?

Tor.

We have pledged our faith
To carry off the fairest in Faenza ——

Asc.

Before the stroke of midnight.

Ord.

'T was my plan
To gather one by one to the place of action;
Lest, going in a troop, we might awake
Suspicion, and put Guido on his guard.

Ber.

A wise precaution, although it was yours.
I wronged you, gentlemen; I thought you shrunk
Even from sin, when there was danger in 't.
It seems there are deeds black enough to make
Even Torelli brave, Ascolti prompt,
And Ordelaffi witty. But the place?

Man.

Beside San Stefano.

Ber.

The hour of meeting?

Man.

Half an hour after vespers. There await us.
And now, good rest my lords; the night wanes fast,
My duchess will be weary. [*All laugh.*

All.

Sir, good-night! [*Going.—Exit Manfredi* C.

Ber.

Sleep well, Torelli. Dream of charging home
In the van of some fierce fight.

Tor.

My common dream. [*Crosses to* L.

Ber.

'T is natural; dreams go by contraries.
And you, Ascolti, dream of telling truth;
And, Ordelaffi, that you have grown wise.

Tor.

And you, that your back 's straight, your legs a match.

Asc.

And your tongue tipped with honey.

Ord.

Come, my lords, [*Crosses to* L.
Leave him to spit his venom at the moon,
As they say toads do!

[*Exeunt all but Bertuccio, laughing,* L. 1. E.

Ber.

Take my curse among you,
Fair, false, big, brainless, outside shows of men!
For once your gibes and jeers fall pointless from me.
My great revenge is nigh, and drowns all sense:
Vengeance swells out my veins, and lifts my head,
And makes me terrible! Come, sweet to-morrow,
And put my enemy's heart into my hand,
That I may gnaw it!

CURTAIN.

Act Second.

SECOND NIGHT.

Scene First. FAENZA. A ROOM IN BERTUCCIO'S HOUSE. THE WALLS ARE HUNG WITH TAPESTRY, WHICH CONCEALS A SMALL RECESS AND ALSO A SECRET DOOR COMMUNICATING WITH A PRIVATE STAIR-WAY. A WINDOW, OPENING ON THE STREET, WITH A BALCONY. A LUTE AND FLOWERS ON TABLE. A LAMP, LIGHTED. BELL STRIKES THE QUARTER. TORELLI AND BRIGITTA DISCOVERED.

Bri.

Hark, there 's the quarter! you must hence, fair signor.

Tor.

But a few moments more of your sweet presence?

Bri.

Saint Ursula, she knows, 't is not my will
That drives you hence; but if my master found
That I received a man into the house,
'T were pity of my place, if not my life.

Tor.

Your master is a churl, that would condemn
These maiden blooms to wither on the tree.

Bri.

Churl you may call him! why he 'd have the house
A prison. If you heard the coil he keeps
Of bolts, and bars, and locks! Lord knows the twitter

I 've been in all to-day, about the key
I lost this morning; it unlocks the door
Of yonder stair that leads down to the street.

Tor.

'T was lucky I came by just when you dropt it.

Bri.

Dropt! nay, signor, 't was whipped off by some cut-purse,
That thought to filch my coin.

Tor.

That 's a shrewd guess!
He must have flung it from him where I found it,
Not knowing of what jewel it unlocked
The casket!

Bri.

How can I pay your pains that brought it back!

Tor.

By ever and anon giving me leave
To come and sun myself in your chaste presence.

Bri.

Alas, sweet signor!

Tor.

O! divine Brigitta!

Bri.

But, I must say farewell. Vespers are over;
My mistress will be waiting, she 's so fearful.

Tor.

As if her unripe beauties were in danger,
While your maturer loveliness can walk
The streets unguarded.

Bri.

Nay, I 'm a poor, fond, thing! Lord knows the risk
I run to let you in.

Tor.

I warrant now
You 've some snug nook where, if your master came,
You could bestow me at a pinch.

Bri.

I know none,
Unless 't were here, behind the arras; look!
[*Lifting arras from the recess.*
Here 's a hole too, whence you could peep to see
When the coast 's clear!

Tor.

There 's room enough for two. [*Aside.*
Brigitta!

Bri.

Signor!

Tor.

How if this had served
For hiding others, before me?

Bri.

I swear
By the eleven thousand virgins——

Tor.

That 's
Too many by ten thousand and nine hundred
And ninety-nine! Vouch but your virgin self,
And I am satisfied!

Bri.

Alack, a-day!
To be suspected after all these years.

Tor.

Pardon a lover's jealousy; this kiss
Shall wipe away the memory of my wrong.
What will not loyalty drive a man to? [*Aside.*
There! [*Kisses her.*

Bri. [*Aside.*

He has the sweetest lips! And now begone,
Sweet signor, if you love me.

Tor.

"If," Brigitta!
Banish me then to outer darkness straight!
Farewell, my full-blown rose! let others prize
The opening bud; the ripe, rich flower for me!

Bri.

O, the saints, how he talks! This way, sweet signor.
[*Taking a key from her girdle.*
The secret door; the key you found and brought me
Unlocks it. [*Unlocking secret door, in recess.*

Tor.

[*Taking another from his girdle — aside.*

Else, why did I filch it from you,
And have this, its twin brother, forged to-day?

Bri. [*Taking the lamp.*

I 'll light you out, and lock the door behind you.
"Safe bind, safe find."

Tor.

Good-night, sweet piece of woman,
I leave my heart in pledge.
Now for the duke. [*Aside.*

[*Brigitta holds open the door.— Exit Torelli.— She lights him down and then closes and locks the door.*

Bri.

He 's gone, bless his sweet face! To think what risks
Men will run that are lovers, and indeed
Weak women, too! Lord! if my master knew.
'T is lucky San Costanza is hard by,
I should be fearful else. Faenza 's full

Of gallants, and who knows what might befall
A poor young woman like myself, with nought
Except her innocence to be her safeguard! [*Exit* R. I. E.

[*As soon as she has closed the door Torelli re-enters, with Manfredi, from recess.*

Tor.

This way, my lord: the dragon has departed.

Man.

'T is time; I was aweary of my watch.

Tor.

You were alone, at least. Think of my lot,
That had to make love to a tough old spinster.
I would we had changed parts. Why, good my lord
I had to kiss her. Faugh! when shall I get
The garlic from my beard? But here 's the cage
That holds our bird. We must ensconce ourselves,
For they 'll be here anon; vespers were over
Before we entered.

Man.

Thanks to your device
Of the forged key. Yet that was scarcely needed;
I 've climbed more break-neck balconies than that
[*Pointing to window.*
Without a silken ladder. So, a lute, [*Looking around.*
A missal, flowers! more tokens of a maid
Than of a mistress. Well, so much the better;
I long to see the girl. Is she as fair
As Serafino painted?

Tor.

Faith, my lord,
She 's fair enough to justify more sonnets
Than e'er fat Petrarch pumped out for his Laura.
She is a paragon of blushing girlhood,
Full of temptation to the finger-tips.

I marvel at myself, that e'er I yielded
This amourous enterprize, even to you;
But that my loyalty outbears my love.

Man.

I will requite your loyalty, fear not;
But where shall we bestow ourselves?

Tor.

In here; [*Lifting the arras.*
The old crone showed it me but now—there 's cover
And peeping-place sufficient. Hark! they come:
Stand close, my lord. [*They retire behind the arras.*

[*Enter Fiordelisa and Brigitta* R. I. E.

Bri.

And he was there to-night?

Fio.

O yes! He offered me the holy water
As I passed in. I trembled so, Brigitta,
When our hands met, I fear he must have marked it,
But that he seemed almost as trembling, too,
As I was.

Bri.

He! a brazen popinjay,
I 'll warrant me, for all his downcast looks!
I wonder how my master would endure
To hear of such audacious goings on!

Fio.

That makes me sad. My father is so kind,
I cannot bear to have a secret from him.
Sometimes I feel as I would tell him all;
But then, I think, perhaps he would forbid me
From going out to church; and 't is so dull
To be shut up here all the long bright day:
From morn till dark to mark the busy stir
Under the window, and the happy voices

Of holiday-makers, that go out and in
Just as they please. Look at the birds, Brigitta!
Their wings are free, yet no harm comes to them;
I 'm sure they 're innocent! And then to hear
Sometimes the trumpets, as the knights ride by,
And tramp of armèd men, sometimes a lute ——
[*A lute sounds outside.*
Hark, 't is his lute! I know the air; how sweet!
My good Brigitta, would there be much harm
If I touched mine — only a little touch —
To tell him I am listening?

Bri.

Holy saints,
Was e'er such boldness! I must have your lute
Locked up. These girls! these girls!
Bar them from court,
And they 'll find matter in church;
Keep them from speech,
And they 'll make cat-gut do the work of tongue!
Better be charged to keep a cat from cream,
Than a girl from gallants! [*Lute ceases.*

Fio.

Nay, but, good Brigitta,
This gentleman is none.

Bri.

How do you know?

Fio.

He never speaks to me, scarce looks, or if
He do, it is but to withdraw his gaze
As hastily as I do mine. I 've seen him
Blush when our eyes met; not like yon rude man,
Who pressed upon me with such words and looks
As made me blush — you know the time —
When that kind lady, Countess Malatesta,
Scarce saved me from his boldness.

Bri.

Tilly-vally!
There are more ways of bird-catching than one;
He 's the best fowler who least scares his quarry.
But I must go and see the supper toward.
Your father will be here anon. [*Exit* L. 1. E.

Fio.

Dear father!
Would he were here, that I might rest my head
Upon his breast, and have his arms about me;
For then I feel there 's something I may love,
And not be chidden for it. [*Lute sounds.*
Hark! again!
If I durst answer!
How sad he must be, out there in the dark,
Not knowing if I mark his music.
[*Takes her lute, then puts it away.*
No!
My father would be angry: sad enough
To have one joy I may not share with him;
Yet there can be no harm in listening.
I thought to-night he would have spoken to me,
But then Brigitta came, and he fell back.
I 'm glad he did not speak, and yet I 'm sorry;
I should so like to hear his voice—just once!—
He comes in my dreams, now, but he never speaks——
[*Lute ceases.*
I 'm sure 't is soft and sweet! [*Listening.*
His lute is hushed.
What if I touched mine, now that he is gone?
I must not look out of the casement!—Yes,
I 'm sure he 's gone! [*Takes her lute and sings.*

[*Note.—Song may be given or omitted at pleasure.*]

Man. [*Aside, lifting the arras.*

She is worth ten Ginevras!

Tor. [*Holding him back.*

Not yet!

Man.

Unhand me, I will speak to her!

Tor.

My lord! It is Bertuccio! In, quick!

[*Bertuccio appears at the door* R. I. E.—*His dress is sober and his manner composed.*—*He stands for a moment at the door fondly contemplating Fiordelisa; then steps quietly forward.*

Ber.

My own!

Fio.

[*Turning suddenly and flinging herself into his arms*—

My father!

Ber.

Closer, closer yet!
Let me feel those soft arms about my neck,
This dear cheek on my heart! No, do not stir,
It does me so much good! I am so happy;
These minutes are worth years.

Fio.

My own dear father!

Ber.

Let me look at thee, darling. Why, thou growest
More and more beautiful! Thou 'rt happy here?
Hast all that thou desirest, thy lute, thy flowers?
She loves her poor old father? Blessings on thee,
I know thou dost, but tell me so.

[*Bertuccio sits. Fiordelisa kneels beside him.*

Fio.

I love you,
I love you very much! I am so happy

When you are with me. Why do you come so late,
And go so soon? Why not stay always here?

Ber.

Why not! why not! O, if I could! To live
Where there 's no mocking, and no being mocked,
No laughter, but what 's innocent; no mirth
That leaves an after-bitterness like gall.

Fio.

Now you are sad! There 's that black, ugly cloud
Upon your brow; you promised, the last time,
It never should come when we were together.
You know when you 're sad I 'm sad too.

Ber.

My bird!
I 'm selfish even with thee; let dark thoughts come,
That thy sweet voice may chase them, as they say
The blessèd church-bells drive the demons off.

Fio.

If I but knew the reason of your sadness,
Then I might comfort you; but I know nothing,
Not even your name.

Ber.

I have no name for thee,
But "father."

Fio.

In the convent, at Ceséna,
Where I was reared, they used to call me orphan.
I thought I had no father, till you came,
And then they needed not to say I had one;
My own heart told me that.

Ber.

I often think
I had done well to have left thee there, in the peace
Of that still cloister: but it was too hard —
My empty heart so hungered for my child;

For those dear eyes that look no scorn for me,
That voice that speaks respect and tenderness,
Even for me. My dove, my lily-flower,
My only stay in life. O God! I thank thee
That thou hast left me this at least. [*He weeps.*

Fio.

Dear father!
You 're crying now; you must not cry, you must not,
I cannot bear to see you cry.

Ber.

Let be!
'T were better than to see me laugh.

Fio.

But wherefore?
You say you are so happy here, and yet
You never come but to weep bitter tears.
And I can but weep too, not knowing why.
Why are you sad? O, tell me, tell me all!

Ber.

I cannot. In this house I am thy father;
Out of it what I am boots not to say;
Hated, perhaps; or envied; feared, I hope,
By many; scorned by more, and loved by none.
In this one innocent corner of the world
I would but be to thee a father; something
August and sacred.

Fio.

And you are so, father.

Ber.

I love thee with a love strong as the hate
I bear for all but thee. [*Fiordelisa starts in alarm.*
Come, sit beside me,
With thy pure hand in mine, and tell me still,
"I love you," and "I love you;" only that.
Smile on me—so!—thy smile is passing sweet!

Thy mother used to smile so once. O God!
I cannot bear it. Do not smile, it wakes
Memories that tear my heart-strings. Do not look
So like thy mother, or I shall go mad!

Fio.

O, tell me of my mother!

Ber.

No, no, no!

Fio.

She 's dead?

Ber.

Yes.

Fio.

You were with her when she died?

Ber.

No! leave the dead alone, talk of thyself—
Thy life here. Thou heed'st well my caution, girl,
Not to go out by day, nor show thyself
There, at the casement.

Fio.

Yes; some day, I hope,
You will take me with you, but to see the town;
'T is so hard to be shut up here, alone.

Ber.

Thou hast not stirred abroad?

Fio.

Only to vespers;
You said I might do that, with good Brigitta.
I never go forth or come in alone.

Ber.

That 's well. I grieve that thou shouldst live so close.
But if thou knew'st what poison 's in the air,
What evil walks the streets, how innocence

Is a temptation, beauty but a bait
For desperate desires:—no man, I hope,
Has spoken to thee?

Fio.

Only one.

Ber.

Ha! who?

Fio.

I know not; 't was against my will.

Ber.

You gave
No answer?

Fio.

No; I fled.

Ber.

He followed you?

Fio.

A gracious lady gave me kind protection,
And bade her train guard me safe home. O, father,
If you had seen how good she was, how gently
She soothed my fears—for I was sore afraid—
I 'm sure you 'd love her.

Ber.

Did you learn her name?

Fio.

I asked it, first, to set it in my prayers,
And then, that you might pray for her.

Ber.

I pray! [*Aside.*
Her name? [*To Fiordelisa.*

Fio.

The Countess Malatesta.

Ber.

Count Malatesta's wife protect my child!

[*Fiordelisa starts up in alarm at his manner.*

You have not seen her since?

Fio.

No; though she urged me
So hard to come to her; and asked my name;
And who my parents were; and where I lived.

Ber.

You did not tell her?

Fio.

Who my parents were?
How could I, when I do not know it?

Ber.

Patience, my darling; trust thy father's love,
That there is reason for this mystery.
The time may come when we may live in peace,
And walk together free, under free heaven:
But that cannot be here, nor now!

Fio.

O, when,
When shall that time arrive?

Ber.

When what I live for
Has been achieved.

Fio.

What you live for?

Ber.

Revenge! [*Rises and goes* R.

Fio.

O do not look so, father!

Ber.

Listen, girl:
You asked me of your mother; it is time
You should know why all questioning of her

Racks me to madness. Look upon me, child;
Misshapen as I am, there once was one
Who, seeing me despised, mocked, lonely, poor,
Loved me, I think, most for my misery:
Thy mother, like thee, just so pure, so sweet.
I was a public notary in Ceséna;
Our life was humble, but so happy: thou
Wert in thy cradle then, and many a night
Thy mother and I sate hand in hand together,
Watching thy innocent smiles, and building up
Long plans of joy to come.

Fio.

Alas! she died.

Ber.

Died!
There are deaths 't is comfort to look back on;
Hers was not such a death. A devil came
Across our quiet life, and marked her beauty:
She scorned his offers,
But he, a noble, great and powerful,
Bore her—by force—away, and from that hour
I never saw her more: they brought me news
That she was dead!

Fio.

Ah me!

Ber.

And I was mad,
For years and years, and when my wits came back—
If e'er they came—they brought one haunting purpose,
That since has shaped my life—to have revenge:
Revenge upon her wronger and his order!

Fio.

Father, 't is not for me to question with you:
But, think—revenge belongeth not to man;
It is God's attribute! usurp it not!

Ber.

Preach abstinence to him that dies of hunger;
Tell the poor wretch who perishes of thirst
There 's danger in the cup his fingers clutch;
But bid me not forswear revenge. No word!
Thou knowest now why I mew thee up so close;
Keep thee out of the streets; shut thee from eyes
And tongues of lawless men; for, in these days,
All men are lawless. 'T is because I fear
To lose thee, as I lost thy mother.

Fio.

Father,
I 'll pray for her.

Ber.

Do, and for me; good-night!

Fio.

O, not so soon; with all these sad, dark thoughts,
These bitter memories. You need my love:
I 'll touch my lute for you, and sing to it.
Music, you know, chases all evil angels.

Ber.

I must go: 't is grave business calls me hence.
'T is time that I was at my post. [*Aside.*
My own, sleep in thine innocence. [*To Fiordelisa.*
Good-night! good-night!

Fio.

But let me see you to the outer door.

Ber.

Not a step further, then. [*Music till they go out.*
God guard this place,
That here my flower may grow, safe from the blight
Of look, or word impure, a holy thing
Consecrate to thy service, and my love!

[*Exeunt Bertuccio and Fiordelisa* R. I. E.—*Manfredi and Torelli come forward.*

Man.

His daughter! That so fair a branch should spring
From such a gnarlèd and misshapen stock!

Tor.

But did you mark how he raved of revenge
Upon our order?

Man.

By the mass, I think
That Guido Malatesta is the man
That played him the shrewd trick he told the girl of.
'T was at Ceséna, marked you; the time fits.
That 's why he hounds me on after the countess.
What! must I be the tool of his revenge?
I 'll teach this scurril slave to strike at nobles!

Tor.

Hark! what 's that? [*Listening.*

Man.

'T is outside the window!

Tor.

Yes, [*Listening.*
By Bacchus, some one climbs the balcony!

Man.

A gallant?

Tor.

In, sir; see the play played out.

Man.

But I 'll not be forestalled!

Tor.

We 've time enough. [*They retire into the recess.*

[*Enter Aquila from the balcony.*

Aqu.

Pardon, sweet saint, if I profane thy shrine.
I watched Bertuccio forth; he passed me close;
I feared he would have seen me. I have sworn
Not to betray their foul design to him.
And to warn her this means alone is left me. [*Music.*
Hark! 't is her gracious step; she comes this way.

[*Enter Fiordelisa.*

Fio.

Comfort of the afflicted, comfort him!
Turn his revengeful purpose to submission,
And grant that I may grow to take the place
My mother has left empty in his heart!
He 's gone! And I had not the heart to speak
Of the young gentleman who follows me.
He asked if any spoke to me; I told
The truth: he never spoke to me.

[*Seeing Aquila.—Music ceases.*

Who 's there? Brigitta! help!

Aqu.

Silence! but have no fear;
I am not here to harm you; do not tremble.
I would die, lady, rather than offend you.

Fio.

O sir, how came you here?

Aqu.

I knew no other way
But by the balcony. Desperate occasions
Dispense with ceremony. My respect
Is absolute. Fear not: I am not here
To say "I love you," nor to tell you how
For months your face has been my beacon star.
My passion never would have found a tongue,
It is too reverent: but your safety, lady,
I can be bold for that.

Fio.

My safety!

Aqu.

Threatened
With desperate danger. Think you one so fair
Could even pray in safety in Faenza?
You have been seen: your beauty hath been buzzed
In the court's amorous ear: there is a project
To scale your balcony to-night.

Fio.

O father!

Aqu.

He cannot save you; what were his sole strength
Against the bravos that the duke commands,
For any deed of ill! My arm and sword
Are stronger than your father's, and are yours
As absolutely. And yet what were these?
I could die for you, but I could not save you.

Fio.

What shall I do.

Aqu.

Have you no friends, protectors
To whom you might betake yourself?

Fio.

Alas!
I am a stranger here.

Aqu.

Think, have you none?

Fio.

Ha! if the Countess Malatesta ——

Aqu.

What?
You know her?

Fio.

She once rescued me from insult
Of a rude man; and promised help whene'er
I chose to seek it.

Aqu.

She is good, and pure,
And powerful moreover — that 's the chief.
Go to her straight; you have no time to lose.
Midnight is fixed for their foul enterprize.

Fio.

But how to find the house? And then the streets
Are dark and dangerous. I 've but our servant,
Brigitta ——

Aqu.

Not a word to her! She 's false.
Can you trust me? I 'll lead you to the countess.

Fio. [*Aside.*

Were this a stratagem!

Aqu.

I see you doubt me:
I know you have good cause to doubt all men.
O, could I bare my heart, and show you there
Your image set amongst its holiest thoughts,
Beside my mother's well-remembered face!
Could truth speak with the tongue, look from the eyes,
You would not doubt me. What can oaths avail?
He who could cheat you would not fear to cheat
God and his saints! Lady, it is the truth
That I have spoken! May heaven give you faith
To trust in me; but if not, I will stay,
And die in your defence.

Fio.

Sir, I will trust you,
And heaven so deal with you as you with me.
Go with me to the Countess Malatesta;
I 'll seek the shelter of her roof to-night,
To-morrow must bring counsel for the future.

Aqu.

O, bless you for this trust! Come, quick, but soft.
Put on your veil; fear not, I am your guard,
Your slave, your sentinel. I crave no guerdon,
Not even a look! Enough for me to save you.

[*Exeunt Fiordelisa and Dell' Aquila* R. I. E.

Man.

[*Breaking from behind the arras, Torelli following him.*

Why did you hold me back? Our project 's marred.
This moonstruck poet bears away the prize,
And I am fooled.

Tor.

Nay, trust my cooler brain.
I 'll follow him to Malatesta's. Sure
He 'll give her shelter?

Man.

In his lady's absence?

Tor.

Even so. The old ruffian can be courteous
When there 's a pretty face in question!

Man.

Let him!
I 'll break his house, or any man's that dares
Set his locks in the way of my good pleasure!

Tor.

Why not? 'T will give a double pungency
To our revenge upon Bertuccio.
We only looked to keep the foul-mouthed knave
Out of the way while we bore off his pearl;
But now we 'll use him for the robbery.
He shall see us scale Malatesta's windows;
But she whom we bear thence, muffled and gagged,
Shall be the hunch-backed scoffer's pretty daughter.

Man.

A rare revenge! and so this brain-sick poet
And my curst jester may console each other.
Watch them to Malatesta's; I 'll to our friends
And find Bertuccio by San Stefano.

[*Exit Manfredi by secret door.* [*Exit Torelli* R. I. E.

Scene Second. { A Street in Faenza [First Grooves]. Night. Bell strikes Nine.

[*Enter Bertuccio.*

Ber.

The hour is struck, they will be here anon;
Trust them to keep a tryst for a villanous deed.
I had need to whet the memory of my wrong,
Or my girl's angel face and innocent tongue
Had shaken even my steadfastness of purpose.
And Malatesta's wife has done her kindness:
I would she had not. But, what 's such slight service
To my huge wrong? Let me but think of that!
I grow too human near my child; I lack
The sharp sting of court scorn to spur the sides
Of my intent. With her I 'm free to weep;
With them I still must laugh, still be their ape
To mop, and mow, and wake their shallow mirth.
True, I can sometimes bite, as monkeys do.
They 'll make mirth of that too! O, courtly sirs!
Sweet-spoken, stalwart gallants! if you knew
The hate that rankles underneath my motley,
The scorn that barbs my wit, the bitterness
That grins behind my laughter, you would start,
And shudder o'er your cups, and cross yourselves
As if the devil were in your company.
Once my revenge achieved, I 'll spurn my chain,

Fool it no more, but give what 's left of life
To thought of her I 've lost, and love of her
That yet is left me.

[*Enter Manfredi, Ascolti, and Ordelaffi, masked and cloaked,* L. 1. E.

Man.

Hist, Bertuccio!

Ber.

Here, gossip Galeotto; you are punctual:
Ascolti too. Grave Signor Florentine,
We 'll show you how the gallants of Faenza
Treat greybeards who aspire to handsome wives.
Remember your beard 's grizzled, and beware.

Asc.

I will stand warned. You have the ladders here?

Ber.

The lackeys wait in charge of them hard by.
But where 's Torelli? we shall want his help.

Ord.

Pshaw! our three swords are plenty.

Ber.

Cry you mercy!
'T is not Torelli's sword we want.

Ord.

What then?

Ber.

His marvellous quick scent of danger, man.
Stick to his skirts, I 'll answer for 't you 're safe.
[*All laugh.*
Perhaps he smelt some risk of buffets here
And so has ta'en him home to bed.

Man.

Away
Towards Malatesta's house; 't was there he promised
To meet us. Sirrah fool, be it thy post
To hold the ladder while we mount; and see
Thou play'st us no jade's trick, or 'ware the whip!

Ber.

Fear not, magnanimous gossip; do your work
With as good will as I do mine. The countess
Sleeps in the chamber
That rounds the angle of the southern front;
I came but now by the palace: all was quiet.

Man.

Set on then, cautiously: use not your swords
Unless on strong compulsion; blood tells tales,
And I want no more feuds upon my hands.

[*Exeunt* R. I. E.

Scene Third.

EXTERIOR OF MALATESTA'S PALACE. A WINDOW ON THE SECOND FLOOR, WITH A BALCONY. MOONLIGHT.

[*Enter Fiordelisa and Dell' Aquila, followed by Torelli, at a distance,* R. U. E.

Aqu.

Be of good cheer, this is the house; I 'll knock
And summon forth the count. [*Knocks.*

Fio.

O, sir! what thanks
Can e'er repay this kindness?

Aqu.

But remember
Who 't was that did it, I am thanked enough.

Fio.

I 'll pray for you, after my father. Hark!

Aqu.

They come! [*Enter a Servant from house.*
Two strangers who crave instant speech [*To Servant.*
Of the Count Malatesta. [*Exit Servant.*

Aqu.

And should I see your father?

Fio.

Then you know him?

Aqu.

Yes.

Fio.

And his occupation? [*He bows.*
'T is more than I do, sir, that am his child.
I do not even know his name.

Aqu.

What he
Keeps secret from you 't is not mine to tell;
'T were well you should not question him too closely:
He shall learn you are safe.

Fio.

And tell him, too,
That 't was you saved me, sir. Promise me that.

[*Enter Malatesta, and two servants with lights, from house.*

Mal.

Who is it would have speech of Malatesta?

Aqu.

You know me, count?

Mal.

Dell' Aquila, well met!
But your companion?
Ha! a petticoat! [*Aside to Aquila.*
So ho, my poet!

Aqu.

Pardon, if I pray
This lady's name may rest a secret, count;
She is in grievous danger; one from which
Your house can shelter her. She owes already
Your countess much, for good help given at need,
So craves to increase the debt.

Mal.

My house is hers,
But she should know my countess is not here.

Fio.

Not here!

Mal.

But, if she dare trust my grey hairs,
She shall have shelter.

Aqu.

Nay, she cannot choose.

Mal.

I 'll give her my wife's chamber, if she will;
Her women to attend her.

Aqu.

All she needs
Is your roof's shelter for the night; to-morrow
Must see her otherwise bestowed.

Mal.

Go in
Fair lady; my poor house, with all that 's in it
Is at your service. Had my wife been here,

You had had gentler tendance; as it is
I 'll lead you to her chamber, and there leave you.

Tor. [*Aside.*

Now to the hunters: I 've marked down the deer.
[*Exit* R. U. E.

Mal. [*To Aquila.*

You will not stay and crush a cup with me?

Aqu.

No, not to-night.
Did you not well to trust me? [*To Fiordelisa.*
Farewell; think of me in your prayers.

Fio.

I cannot
Choose but do that, sir.
O, the thought of him [*Aside.*
Will come, henceforth, betwixt my prayers and heaven!
[*Exit Malatesta, leading in Fiordelisa.*

Aqu.

His child! Since when did grapes grow upon thistles?
And yet I 'm glad to know the tie that binds
The two together such a holy one.
[*The scene gradually becomes dark.*
Sweet angel, sister angels guard thy sleep!
Now, to seek out Bertuccio, and tell him
The danger she has 'scaped, and thank the saints
That made me her preserver. [*Exit* L. I. E.

[*Brief pause.—Music.—Enter Bertuccio, Manfredi, Ascolti, Ordelaffi, and Torelli, with servants carrying ladder* R. U. E.—*Music ceases as they enter.*

Man.

Softly, you knaves! With velvet tread, like tigers!

Ber.

Say rather, cats. [*A light appears at the window.*

Tor.

This is the balcony.

Ber.

I have noted in this summer weather
The window 's left unbarred.

Asc.

Ha, there 's a light!
If she were stirring?

Ber.

What an' if she were?
A sudden spring — a cloak flung o'er her head —
If she have time to scream you are but bunglers.

Man.

My cloak will serve. [*Takes off cloak.*

Asc.

If she alarm the house
It might go hard with us.

Ber.

O, cats that long
For fish, yet fear to wet your feet! I 'll shame you.
Let me mount first.
Give me your cloak, gossip! [*To Manfredi.*

Man.

By your leave, fool, I 'll net my own bird. Back!
Hold thou the ladder; that is lacquey's work,
And fits thee best. Ascolti and Torelli,
Guard the approaches. I and Ordelaffi
Will be enough to mount, and snare the game.

[*The light is extinguished; the servants set up ladder against the balcony. Ordelaffi mounts the ladder first; then Manfredi.*

Ber.

All 's dark now. Up! [*Bertuccio holds ladder.*

Man. [*On ladder.*

Why, rogue, how thy hand shakes!
Is 't fear?

Ber.

'T is inward laughter, Galeotto,
To think how blank Guido will look to-morrow
To find the nest cold, and his mate borne off!

[*Music pp. Manfredi and Ordelaffi enter the house, through the window.—Moonlight till they come down the ladder.*

Ber. [*Listening.*

Ha! they are in by this time. Cautious fools!
I had done 't myself in half the space! So, Guido,
You love your young wife well, they say; that 's brave.
Now, Malatesta,
Learn what it is to wake, and find her gone
That was the pride and joy of your dim eyes,
The comfort of your age. I welcome you
To the blank hearth, the hunger of the soul,
The long, dark days, and miserable nights!
These you gave me; I give them back to you!
I, the despised, deformed, dishonoured jester,
Have reached up to your crown, and pulled it down,
And flung it in the mire as you flung mine!

[*A stifled cry within.—Manfredi and Ordelaffi reappear on the balcony, bearing Fiordelisa in their arms, muffled in Manfredi's cloak.—They come down the ladder.*

Man.

Away all; to my garden house,
There to bestow the prize!

[*Exeunt all but Bertuccio* R. U. E., *the servants carrying off the ladder.*

Ber.

'T is done!
Now, murdered innocent, thou art avenged!
I cannot sleep! I 'll walk the night away!
It is no night for me, my day has come! [*Music forte.*

CURTAIN.

Act Third.

THE NEXT DAY.

Scene First. { MANFREDI'S HOUSE. A ROOM WITH DOORS L. I. E. AND R. I. AND 2. E., COMMUNICATING WITH AN INNER CHAMBER. TABLES AND CHAIRS R. AND L.

[*Enter Fiordelisa* R. I. E.

Fio.

Where am I? What has happened? Let me think.
Those men—that blinding cloak—the fresh night air
That struck upon my face—then a wild struggle,
In strong and mastering arms—then a long blank.
I must have fainted; when I woke I lay
On a rich couch in that room. Has he brought me
Into the very danger that he said
He came to take me from? O cruel! No,
Falsehood could ne'er have found such words, such looks.
Father! O, when he comes and finds me gone!
I must go hence! [*Looking round*
That door —— [*She runs to door* L. I. E.
'T is locked! [*Shaking door.*
Help! help!
How dare they draw their bolts on me? My father
Shall punish them for this! I will go forth!

[*Shakes door again.— The door opens from within.*

At last! Whoe'er you are, sir, help me hence!

[*Enter Manfredi* L. I. E.

Take me back to my father! He will bless you,
Reward you ——

Man.

Nay, your own lips must do that.

Fio.

O, they shall bless you too, sir.

Man.

To be blessed
With that sweet mouth were well, yet scarce enough.

Fio.

O, sir, we waste time. Set what price you will
On the great service, I am sure my father
Will pay you. [*Manfredi relocks the door* L. 1. E.

Man.

If we 're to discuss your ransom
'T were fairest we should do it with closed doors:
The terms can scarce be settled till you know
Your prison—jailer—in what risk you stand.
First, for your prison: know you where you are?

Fio.

No.

Man.

In the Duke Manfredi's palace. Next:
Know you your jailer?

Fio.

Who?

Man.

Manfredi's self.

Fio.

Woe 's me!

Man.

What? Is the news so terrible?

Fio.

I 've heard Brigitta and my father, too,
Speak of the Duke Manfredi.

Man. [*Aside.*

Here 's a chance
To hear a genuine judgment of myself!
They said ——

Fio.

That he was cruel, bold, unsated
In thirst for evil pleasures; it was odds
Whether more feared or hated in Faenza.

Man. [*Aside.*

Trust the crowd's garlic cheers and greasy caps!
The knaves shall know me worse ere they have done.
I thank you, pretty one; I am the duke.

Fio.

Then heaven have mercy on me!

Man.

If report
Speak truth, your prayer were idle; but report
Is a sad liar. Do I look the ogre
They painted to you? Nay, my fluttered dove,
Smooth but those ruffled feathers; look around you.
Is this so grim a dungeon? Was your couch
Last night so hard, your 'tendance so ungentle?
I am your prisoner, fairest, not you mine.

Fio.

Then let me go.

Man.

Not till you know at least,
What you will lose by going. All Faenza
Is mine, and she I favour may command
Whate'er Faenza holds of wealth or pleasure;
I 'll pour them at her feet, and after fling
Myself there too, to woo a gracious word.
What 's life ungraced by love! a dismal sky
Without sun, moon, or starlight! 'T is a cup

Drained of the wine that reddened in its gold,
A lute shorn of its strings, a table stripped
Of all its festal meats, mere life in death.
A jewel like thy beauty is not meet
To be shut in a chest; it should be set
To shine in princely robes, to grace a crown.
I would set thee in mine. [*Approaching her.*

Fio.

Stand back, my lord.

Man. [*Halting.*

Why, little fool, I would not harm a hair
On thy fair head. Think what thy life has been,
How dull, and dark, and dreary! It shall be
As bright, and glad, and sunny, as the prime
Of summer flowers. Only repel not joy
Because it comes borne in the hand of love.

Fio.

O, you profane that name! Is love the friend
Of night and violence and robbery?
Let me go hence, I say. I have a father
Who 'll make you terribly aby this wrong,
Lord as you are!

Man.

Your father! By the mass,
She makes me laugh! Your father, girl! Bertuccio!

Fio.

That I should learn my father's name from him!
Yes, duke, my father!

Man.

Why, he is my slave,
A thing that crouches to me like my hound,
To beg for food, or deprecate the lash,
My butt, my whipping-block, my fool in motley.

Fio.

It is not true. This is a lie, like all
That you have said. Let me go forth, I say.

Man.

You 're in my palace. Here are none but those
To whom my will is law; your calls for help
Will only bring more force — if I could stoop
To use force with a lady.

Fio.

Then you have
Some manhood in you. Look, sir, at us two:
You are a duke, you say; your power but bounded
By your own will. I am a poor weak girl,
E'en weaker than I knew, if what you say
Touching my father, be the truth. What honour
Is to be won on me? Yet, won it may be,
By yielding to my prayers to be set free,
To be sent home. O, let me but go hence,
As I came hither; I will speak to none
Of this night's outrage; not even to my father.

Man.

Ask anything but this.

Fio.

Nothing but this!
You have a wife, my lord; what if she knew?

Man.

The more need to take care you tell her not.
Come, little one, give up these swelling looks,
Though they become you mightily. [*Approaching her.*

Fio.

Stand off! [*He advances; she retreats to* R. 2. E.
Help! help!
A door! ha! [*She opens it and rushes in.*

Man.

Deeper in the toils! [*Locking the door.*
The lamb seeks shelter in the wolf's own den! [*Laughs.*

Tor. [*Outside,* L. 1. E.

My lord!

Man.

Torelli's voice!
How now, Torelli? [*Unlocks the door* L. 1. E.
[*Enter Torelli.*

Tor.

My lord, the duchess is returned.

Man.

Why, man,
Thy news is stale; the duchess has been here
These five hours; she arrived, post haste, ere sunrise.
She must have ridden in the dark. 'T was that
Prevented me from making earlier matins
Before my little saint here.

Tor.

Do you know
What brought the duchess back so suddenly?

Man.

Some jealous fancy pricked her, as I judge
From her accost when we encountered first;
And, as I gathered, she suspects contrivance
Betwixt me and the Countess Malatesta.
'T was a relief, for once, that I could twit her
With groundless fears. I told her Malatesta
Rode yesterday with his lady to Ceséna,
And, for more proof, repeated what he said,
That on my wife's least summons she 'd return;
So she has summoned her, in hopes, no doubt,
To catch me in a lie. Her messenger
Rode to Ceséna just at daybreak. Soon
We may look for him back, bringing, I hope,
Ginevra Malatesta.

Tor.

This is rare.
So falls she off the scent, and leaves you here
To follow up your game with Fiordelisa.

Man.

Even so. I excused me from her presence
By work of state, for which to this pavilion
I had summoned you and the Envoy of Florence,
Said work of state being no less a one
Than to lend me your presence at the banquet
I mean to offer our fair prisoner.
Bid Ordelaffi and Ascolti hither,
And send my men with fruits and wines and sweetmeats,
All that is likeliest to tempt the sense
Of this scared bird.

Tor.

How did you find her, sir?

Man.

Beating her pretty wings against the bars;
Still calling for her father. Shrewdly minded
To peck instead of kissing, silly fledgling!
But I will tame her yet, till she shall come
To perch upon my finger.

Tor.

Where is she?

Man.

In the inner room, whither she fled but now.
Fear not, I turned the key on her; she 's safe.

Tor.

I 'll send what you command, and warn the rest
That you attend them. Good speed to your wooing.

[*Exit* L. 1. E.

Man.

Now for my prisoner! By gentle means
To gain her ear. Asmodeus, tip my tongue
With love's persuasion!

[*Exit into inner room* R. 2. E. *He locks the door within.—Enter the Duchess Francesca, masked, and Bertuccio, who has resumed his fool's dress,* L. 1. E.

Fra. [*Unmasking.*

Was 't not Torelli went hence, even now?

Ber.

I think it was. Be sure he saw us not.

Fra.

Then you still bear me out my husband lies?
That Malatesta's wife has not gone hence?

Ber.

Trust a fool's eyes before a husband's tongue.
I say again, I was at hand last night
When your lord bore from Malatesta's house
Said Malatesta's wife. I saw the deed.
I heard the order given to bring her hither.

Fra.

Then 't was by force, not by the lady's will,
She came?

Ber.

Force? Quotha—force! How many ladies
Have had to bless the "force" that saved their tongue
An awkward "yes." See you not what an answer
"Force" finds for all? It stops a husband's mouth;
Crams its fist down the town's throat; nay; at a pinch
Perks its sufficient self in a wife's face:
Commend me still to "force." It saves more credits
Than e'er it ruined virtues. After folly,
I hold force the best mask that wit has found
To mock the world with! [*Goes to door* R. 2. E.

Fra.

There 's weight in that.
This violence would stand her in good stead,
Were she e'er called in question! Then, what matter,
So I be wronged, if 't is by force or will.
Would I had certain proof!

Ber.

Ha! You want proof?
Come here; [*The Duchess approaches him.*
Stand where I stand. Now listen — close.

Fra. [*Listening at door.*

My husband's voice, in passionate entreaty!

Ber.

Only *his* voice?

Fra.

An answering voice! a woman's!
These are your state affairs, my gracious duke!
[*Comes down.*

Ber.

If you would have more proof, I 'll bring you where
You shall hear his humble tools in last night's business
Discuss the deed; all noble gentlemen,
Who 'd pluck my hood about my ears if I
Durst hint a doubt of their veracity.

Fra.

Do so, and if they bear thy story out
I know my part.

Ber.

What, tears?

Fra.

Tears? Death to both!

Ber.

Take care. His guards are faithful. Can you trust
A hand to do the deed?

Fra.

I trust my own.

Ber.

Women turn pale at blood. Your heart may fail you,
When the time comes to strike.

Fra.

Daggers for men.
I know a surer weapon.

Ber. [*Whispering.*

Poison?

Fra.

Hush!
The Borgia's physician gave it me!
It may be trusted! [*Goes to door* R. 2. E.

Ber. [*Aside.*

My she-leopard's loosed at last! [*Exit* L. 1. E.

Fra. [*Still at the door, listening.*

Past doubt, a woman's tongue! And now my husband's!
How well I know the soft, smooth, pleading voice!
The voice that drew my young heart to my lips,
When, at my father's court, I plighted troth
To him, and he to me. O bitterness!
Now spurned for each new leman of the hour!
O, he shall learn how terrible is hate
That grows of love abused. [*Taking a vial from her bosom.*
Come, bosom friend,
That hast lain cold, of late, against my heart,
As if to whisper to it, "Be thou stone,
When the time calls for me." [*Looking at the vial.*
Each drop 's a death.
What matter who she be? Enough for me
That she usurps the place that should be mine
In Galeotto's love. [*Music.*

Hark! some one comes.

[*She conceals the vial and resumes her mask.—Enter two Chamberlains with white wands, followed by Attendants bearing a banquet. They pass into the inner room.—After them Ascanio, with wine in a golden flagon, on a salver* L. I. E.

Hold, sir, set down your charge. [*To Ascanio.*

Ascan.

By your leave, madam,
'T is for my lord.

Fra.

Since when was that an answer
To give thy lady? [*Removes her mask.*

Ascan.

'T is the duchess! [*Aside.*
Pardon; I knew you not. [*To Francesca.*

Fra.

Enough, sir, set it down,
And wait without till I bid thee bear in.

[*Exit Ascanio* L. I. E.

What need of further proof? Is 't heaven or hell
That sends this apt occasion? Galeotto,
I warned thee, in the spring-time of our loves,
This hand could kill as easy as caress;
You laughed, and took it in your ampler palm,
And said that death were pleasant from such white
And taper fingers. Try it now!

[*She pours some of the contents of the vial into the flagon of wine.*

'T is done! [*Re-enter Bertuccio* L. I. E.

Ber.

Hide, here, Madonna; [*Opening door* R. I. E.
Here their lordships come!
I met them on the way, so brave and merry!

My gossip Galeotto bids them here—
To feast with him and her!

[*Exit Bertuccio* L. 1. E.—*Francesca starts as if stung; then rings bell on table* R.—*Re-enter Ascanio* L. 1. E.—*She signs to him; he bears in the wine* R. 2. E.

Fra. [*Aside.*

Their doom is sealed!

[*Exit Francesca* R. 1. E.—*Re-enter Bertuccio, with Ascolti and Ordelaffi* L. 1. E.

Ber.

It is your due; you that go out bat-fowling
Lack wine o' mornings to keep up your hearts.

Ord.

Why thou wert there, knave; yet try thou to enter
Into the presence, and they 'll whip thee back.
His highness wants no fool to-day!

Ber.

That 's true,
With you two for his company. But tell me,
How will the lady relish, o'er her wine,
The cut-throat faces that she saw last night?
Methinks 't will mar her appetite.

Asc.

Be sure
She will not look so scared at us
As thou wouldst at the sight of her.

Ber.

Who, I?
Nay, I but held the ladder: we poor knaves
Must take the leavings of your rogueries,
As of your feasts. But prithee, Ordelaffi,
How looked she?

Ord.

Wouldst believe it?
Methought she had a something of thy favour;
As, if so crooked a thing could have a daughter,
Thy daughter might have had.

[*All laugh.—Bertuccio starts.*

Asc.

How now! he winces.
Let 's in at once, my lord.

Ber.

I 'll marshal you; who said that cap and bells
Should be shut out?

Asc.

Stand back, Sir Fool, 't were best;
You may repent your pressing on too far.

Ber.

I fain would see the lady; 't is not often
That one can carry a beauty off at night,
And make her laugh i' the morning.

Ord.

Neither she,
Nor you, I think, are like to breed much mirth
Out of each other.

Ber.

Say you so? Here goes!

[*He runs up to the door* R. 2. E. *Ascanio opens it and motions him back. The two Chamberlains appear at the open door.*

Ascan.

Stand back!

Ber.

I! why I 'm the Fool! Free o' the palace!
Every place except the council-chamber,
And in that I sit by proxy!

Ascan.

'T is the duke's strict order
You enter not this room. [*Bertuccio presses forward.*
Back! or the grooms
Shall score thy hunch to motley. [*Ascanio closes the door.*

Asc.

How now, sirrah,
Call you this marshalling?

Ber.

I am right served! I forgot
That fools in silks should take the precedence
Of fools in motley! Lead the way, my lords!

Ord.

Look, here comes Malatesta.

Ber.

Ha! but stay
To hear me gird at him! You call me bitter;
Now you shall see how merciful I 've been.

Asc. [*To Ordelaffi.*

Waste not your ears on him, the duke awaits us
Beside his beauty—metal more attractive
Than this curst word-catcher.

Ord.

Aye, aye, let 's in.

[*Exeunt Ordelaffi and Ascolti* R. 2. E.—*Enter Francesca* R. 1. E.

Ber.

Now, now, Madonna, have you proof enough?

Fra.

Mountains of proof on proof, if proof were needed;
But had disproof come with them, and not proof,
'T is all too late.

Ber.

How?

Fra.

I have drugged their wine.
They will sleep sound to-night. [*She retires up stage.*

Ber. [*Aside.*

Choose woman's hands,
You that would have grim work nimbly dispatched.
Here 's Malatesta! — looking black as night.
So, lord, I hope you liked your waking news.
Now, now, to gloat over his agony!

[*Enter Malatesta* L. 1, E.

Mal.

Ha, knave! I 'd see the duchess.

Ber.

Marvellous!

Mal.

How now?

Ber.

To think that they can make such caps
To hide all trace of them.

Mal.

Of what, knave?

Ber.

Horns.

Mal.

Rascal!

Ber.

I hope your lordship had good rest;
And that my lady, too, slept undisturbed.

Mal.

What mean you, sirrah?

Ber.

Nay, strain not so hard
To keep it down; you are among friends here.
A grievous loss, no doubt,—but at your age
You could scarce look to keep her to yourself.
Others have lost wives, too,—poor knaves who thought
To stick in their thrum-caps jewels that caught
The eyes of nobles; needs were they must yield
Daughters—or wives.

Mal.

Art mad, or drunk, or both?
My errand 's to thy mistress, not to thee.
Where is she?

Fra. [*Coming forward.*

Here, my lord! [*They talk apart.*

Ber.

He bears it bravely.
But wounds will bleed under an iron corslet;
And how his must be bleeding—for he loved her;
The whole court vouches it.

[*Francesca and Malatesta come forward.*

Fra.

You say your lady slept not here, last night,
But at Ceséna?

Mal.

Or the devil 's in 't.
I saw her safe bestowed there: I can trust
My own eyes, or still better, my own bolts.

Ber. [*Aside.*

Is this old man, too, of Manfredi's council,
To cheat his wife?

Mal.

I little thought to bring her back so soon;
But, on your summons, I have straight recalled her.

Ber. [*Coming between them.*

And she is here: hold him to that, Madonna.

Mal.

Malapert dog!

Fra.

Pardon his licensed tongue.
I fain would see the lady.

Mal.

You shall see her;
I have not far to fetch her. [*Exit* L. 1. E.

Ber.

'T is a lie!—
A cursèd lie, to hide his own foul shame!
Believe him not!

Fra.

But if he bring the lady?

Ber.

Aye, if he bring the lady, then believe him!
He robs me of my right, taking his wrong [*Aside.*
With outward show of calm. Mine turned my brain.
I looked to see him mad, or drive him so!

Man. [*Within.*

More wine, knave!

[*Ascanio enters* R. 2. E., *and goes out* L. 1. E.

Fra.

Ginevra, or another, what of that?
The wrong 's the same, why not the same revenge?

Ber.

The same to you, but not the same to me! [*Aside.*
I tell you Malatesta's wife sits yonder— [*To Francesca.*
Sits at your husband's side. I saw her—I—
Borne off last night! I saw. There is no faith
In eyes or ears or truth, if 't were not she!

[*Re-enter Malatesta, with Ginevra,* L. I. E. *Bertuccio's back is toward them.*

Mal.

Madam, my wife!

Ber. [*Turning.*

Ginevra here! then who
Was that they carried from her bed last night?
Who is 't sits yonder?

Fra.

Tell me, gracious lady,
Where did you sleep last night?

Gin.

Where I scarce thought
To leave so soon, your highness; in Ceséna,
Within my husband's castle.

Fra.

Pardon, madam,
That I have set you on a hurried journey;
Still more that I have wronged you in my thoughts!
[*Laughter heard within.*
They laugh! laugh on, my lord, while it is time. [*Aside.*

Gin.

Wilt please you grant me audience: you shall hear
To the minute how my hours went yesterday,
Down to this moment.

Fra.

Come out in the air;
I stifle within hearing of their mirth. [*Aside.*
Stay here! see that the other 'scape me not.
[*To Bertuccio.*

[*Exeunt Francesca and Ginevra* L. I. E.

Ber.

The other! Not Ginevra? Good, my lord,
[*To Malatesta, who goes to door* R. 2. E.
Your wife slept at Ceséna, yet her chamber
Was not untenanted last night, I 'll swear!

Mal.

And so thou mightst, yet break no oath.

Ber.

Who slept in 't?

Mal.

I know not. Ask Dell' Aquila: 't was he
Brought me the lady, craving shelter for her
From some great danger.

Ber.

But you saw her face?

Mal.

And if I did, think'st thou I 'd trust her name
To thy ass-ears? [*Strikes him.—Exit* R. 2. E.

Ber.

Fooled, mocked of my revenge!
The sweetest morsel on 't whipped from my teeth!
O, I could brain myself with my own bauble!
[*Enter Dell' Aquila* L. 1. E.
Dell' Aquila! He knows. [*Aside.*

Aqu.

Well met, Bertuccio!
I 've sought thee since this morning, nay, since midnight.

Ber.

Ha!

Aqu.

For a matter much concerns thy peace.
Thou hast a daughter. [*Bertuccio starts.*
How I know thou hast
Matters not to my story.

Ber.

Hush, hush, hush!
If you know this, as you are Christian man
And poet,—poets should have softer hearts
Than courts and camps breed now-a-days,—O keep
The knowledge to yourself!

Aqu.

It is too late.
Torelli knew it: had set wolfish eyes
On her ——

Ber.

Well? well?

Aqu.

Had rung her beauty's praise
Here in the court—thou hast no friends here ——

Ber.

Well?

Aqu.

They plotted how to lure thee from the house;
And in thy absence to surprise her window,
And bear her off! They bound me by an oath
To keep it secret from thee, not from her.
I swore to save her, or to lose myself;
So found a desperate means of speech with her,
And warned her of her danger.

Ber.

Thanks, thanks, thanks,
But only warned her!

Aqu.

Placed her too in safety.

Ber.

O heaven! where?

Aqu.

In the house of Malatesta.

Ber.

My child in Malatesta's house last night?

Aqu.

Secure; even in the countess's own chamber.

Ber.

My child! My child!—wronged, murdered!

Aqu.

Ha! by whom?

Ber.

By me, by me! Her father, her own father,
That would have grasped heaven's vengeance,
And has drawn
The bolt on my own head—and hers—and hers!

Aqu.

What do you mean?

Ber.

I counselled the undoing
Of Malatesta's wife; I stood and watched,
And laughed for joy, and held the ladder for them,
And all the while 't was my own innocent child.
Look not so scared! 't is true!—I am not mad!
She 's here—now—in their clutches! [*Laughter within.*
Hark, they laugh!
'T is the hyenas o'er their prey—my child!
And I stand here and cannot lift a hand!

Aqu.

Here 's mine, and my sword, too!

Ber.

O, what were that
Against their felon blades?

Aqu.

True, true! what aid?
Ha! there 's the duchess!

Ber.

I had forgotten her! [*Drawing Aquila to him.*
Man, she has drugged their wine, the bony Death
Plays cupbearer to them; if she drinks, she dies.
[*Enter Ascanio, with wine.*
Look, look. Perchance that is the very wine.
[*He assumes the Fool's manner.*
Halt there, for the fool's toll. No wine goes in
But pays the fool's toll.

Ascan.

Out, knave, stand aside!
[*Bertuccio overthrows the flagon from the salver.*

Ber.

'T is forfeit by the law!

Ascan.

Thy back shall bleed
To make it up. [*Takes flagon, and exit* L. 1. E.

Aqu.

Torelli comes: if he goes in, could we but enter with him;
A word from you might save her from the poison.
[*Enter Torelli* L. 1. E.

Tor.

Good day, Sir Poet; stand aside, Sir Fool.

Ber.

You are going in? [*Gets between Torelli and Aquila.*

Tor.

Aye.

Ber.

There 's a shrewd hiatus
Needs filling at the table. You have war
And love; but, lacking poetry and folly,
War is but butchery and love goes lame.
Tuck us beneath your wings, sweet Baldassare,
And you 'll be trebly welcome.

[*Seizing him by one arm; motions Dell' Aquila to take the other.*

Tor.

The duke for once has shut his doors against
Both poetry and folly. He is cloistered
For grave affairs.

Ber.

Tush, tell me not, sweet gossip.
Why, man, I know that there 's a petticoat;
And more, I know the wearer.

Tor.

Thou!

Ber.

You 've lost
The rarest sport. Ascolti and Ordelaffi
Have had their will of me. For once I 'll own
You 've turned the tables fairly on the fool!
That our Ginevra should be Fiordelisa,
And poor Bertuccio not know! Ha, ha!
O excellent! It was a sleight of hand
I shall remember to my dying day.

Tor.

Nay, and thou tak'st it so?

Ber.

How should I take it?
Besides the pleasantness of it, there 's the honour.
Think, my poor daughter in the duke's high favour.

Why, there are counts by scores
Had pawned their scutcheons
To come into such grace. I warrant now,
You thought I 'd swear and storm, and rend you all,
So shut me out. But, lo you, I am merry,
And so shall she be, if you 'll let me in!
But let me in, I 'll school the silly wench;
Teach her what honour she has come to; thank
The gracious duke, and play the merriest antics.
You 'll swear you never saw me in such fooling;
But take me in.

Tor.

Why now; the fool 's grown wise!
I 'll tell the duke, perchance he 'll let thee in.

[*Exit Torelli* R. 2. E.—*Bertuccio, exhausted by his emotions, falls into chair* L.

Aqu.

Lives hang on minutes here. Said you the duchess
Had mixed the poison, or but meant to mix it?

Ber.

There it is, man; I know not which: even now
Death may be busy at her lips: once in,
In my mad antics I might spurn the board,
And spill the flagons as I did e'en now;
But here I 'm helpless. O, Beëlzebub!
Inspire them with desire to see a father
Make laughter of the undoing of his child!
Ha! some one comes: they 'll let me in!

Tor. [*At the door.*

The duke will none of thy ape's tricks.

[*He closes the door. Bertuccio falls.*

Aqu.

What ho! Torelli!
And you, within, you, my lord duke, 'fore all,
I do proclaim you cowards, ruffians, beasts.
Come out, if you be men, and drive my challenge
Back in my throat, if you 've one heart among you!

Ber.

You speak to men; they 're fiends!

Aqu.

No hope, no hope!
Yes! here 's the duchess, she 's a woman still.

[*Lifts Bertuccio from the ground.*

[*Enter Francesca* L. I. E.

Ber. [*Rushing to her.*

Madam, save my child!
The daughter that I love more than my life!
'T was she they seized last night, and she 's in there!

Fra.

Your child!

Ber.

From death, if not from wrong that 's worse than death,
You still may save her! Have the doors burst open!
You can command here next the duke. If not,
At least forbear the poison. [*Aside, to her.*

Fra. [*Aside, to him.*

'T is too late.
The wine was here.

Ber.

Then this alone remains.
Help me, Aquila; help to burst the door!

[*They break open the door and rush out, followed by Francesca. Quick change to Banquet Hall. Table* C. *Manfredi, Fiordelisa, Malatesta, Ordelaffi, Ascolti, Torelli, and Attendants, discovered.*

Ber. and Aqu. [*Without.*

Drink not, my lords!
Your wine is poisoned!

[*Manfredi staggers from his seat and falls dead* L. *Malatesta and others form group near him. Fiordelisa screams, rushes toward* R., *and faints in the arms of Dell' Aquila, who enters, with Bertuccio.*

All the Nobles.

Who did this deed?

Ber. [*Leaping upon the table.*

I!

[*Ordelaffi and Ascolti stab Bertuccio, who plunges forward and falls, but is not killed.—Enter Francesca.*

Fra.

He lies! 'T was I!
Before all men I 'll answer this.

Ber. [*Crawling to his daughter.*

Before heaven's judgment seat
How shall I answer this? [*Indicating his daughter.*
Dead! dead! My bird—
My lily flower—gone to thy last account,
All sinless as thou wert? My fool's revenge,
Ends but in this. Cold! cold!
Ha! a breath! She lives! she lives!
Say some of you, "She drank not," and I 'll bless
The man that says so; yea, so pray for him
As saints ne'er prayed!

Fio.

Father!

Tor.

She never drank! Thou hast her pure as when
She kissed thy lips last night!

Ber.

O, bless you, bless you!
But, alas! my child, I soon must leave thee!
My life ebbs fast. To thee, Aquila, thee—
The one true heart in all Faenza,
Do I bequeath my all!

[*Bertuccio joins the hands of Dell' Aquila and Fiordelisa.—They raise and support him to a chair.*

Mal.

Madam, you are our prisoner—— [*To Francesca.*

Fra. [*Interrupting him.*

Prisoner?
My father, Giovanni Bentivoglio,
Stands at your gates, in arms. Let who will question
Francesca Bentivoglio of this deed. [*Exit* R. U. E.

Mal. [*To Bertuccio.*

Thou miscreant! what urged thee on to this?

Ber.

Vengeance!

Fio.

Father! ——

Ber.

Aye, vengeance.
Guido Malatesta—
In me behold the wretched man whose wife,
Long years ago, you stole—you murdered!—
Antonio Bordiga!

Mal.

[*Falling, horror-stricken, into chair, and hiding his face.*

You!

Ber.

Ay:—thirsting for revenge, I moved the duke
To carry off your innocent Ginevra—
Your wife!
Though foiled, and slain, yet do I triumph here,
And thou shalt feel, at last, the Fool's revenge!
Guido Malatesta, with my dying breath,
I ——

Fio.

[*Interrupting, and clinging to him.*

No! no! Father!

Ber.

I —— I forgive thee. [*He falls.*
Ah, thou saidst well, my child:
Vengeance is God's prerogative—not man's:
I have usurped it. Pray, O, pray for me.

[*Fiordelisa supports his head.*

Fio.

Father! [*Bertuccio dies.*

CURTAIN.

THE FOOL'S REVENGE.

APPENDIX.

I.—The Author of The Fool's Revenge.

TOM TAYLOR, the author of "The Fool's Revenge," was born at Sunderland, in England, in 1817. He received his education at the Grange School in that place, and at Glasgow University and at Trinity College, Cambridge; and he was graduated with honours. He subsequently held, for two years, the Professorship of English Language and Literature, at the University College, London; but in 1845 was called to the Bar of the Inner Temple. A few years later he entered the Civil Service of Great Britain, with which for a long time he was honourably connected, and from which he was finally retired with a pension. Tom Taylor is the author of many plays, and the adapter of many more. Prominent among the pieces with which his name is associated are "Still Waters Run Deep," "An Unequal Match," "The Ticket-of-Leave-Man," "Twixt Axe and Crown," "The Contested Election," "The Overland Route," "Anne Boleyn," "Joan of Arc," "New Men and Old Acres," "Clancarty," "Henry Dunbar," and "Our American Cousin."

This author has likewise distinguished himself in other branches of literature: He compiled and edited, in 1853, the "Autobiography of B. R. Haydon;" and, in 1859, the "Autobiography and Correspondence of the late C. R. Leslie, R. A." He also completed, in 1865, Leslie's unfinished work on "The Life and Times of Sir Joshua Reynolds." He was one of the original staff of *Once a Week*, and he succeeded the lamented Shirley Brooks as editor of *Punch*. His labours as a journalist and a newspaper correspondent have been continuous, onerous, diversified and successful. Few literary men of our time have worked as faithfully and conscientiously, and none has better deserved the rewards of prosperity and honourable fame. W. W.

II.—Costume for The Fool's Revenge.

The following passage, indicative of the style of dress proper to be used in the representation of this piece, is copied from Cæsar Vecellio's

book on Costume—"Habiti Antichi e Moderni," Venice, 1598. It refers to usages in apparel, in Italy, in the period of this play.

"The ladies wore a *balzo* [head-dress], of various colours, composed of a tissue of gold or of silk, and worked with a representation of flowers, or with other designs. They also carried gold chains, girdles of great value, and fans, with highly ornamented holders. Their shoulders were covered with a sort of plaited collar, or neckerchief [*barero*], of linen or of cambric. The gown was generally of damask, of a crimson or violet colour, having a lower border, six inches wide. The sleeves were slashed and puffed, permitting the chemise to show through. The cuffs, in which the arms of the chemise ended, accorded in style with the collar. The bodice, when worn, consisted of tissue of gold, and was unusually long. Sometimes the robe was made so long as to trail on the ground.

"The men wore on their heads a *balzo* similar to that of the women, made of leather, and round like a diadem. Above this they placed a head-dress composed of a tissue of gold or silk. The shirt had a plaited bosom, and a low, ruffled collar. The waist of the coat was short, and the skirt reached to the knees; the sleeves were full, and extended to the elbow; the shirt-sleeves, which were provided with ruffled cuffs, covered the rest of the arm. The coat was ornamented with broad, coloured bands, made of cloth of gold, or velvet, or other material. The shoes were of velvet."

It is further stated by Vecellio that the garment now known as an "arm-hole cloak" was sometimes worn over the attire first described. This was made of silk or velvet, and depended to the ankles. It was embellished with a broad, turn-over collar, sometimes made of fur, and with hanging sleeves, which might be worn over those of the coat and shirt. The breeches were slashed and puffed, and were fastened below the knee. The shoes were very broad at the toes.

Bertuccio should, of course, wear motley. The hood of the court jester was garnished with ass's ears, and he commonly carried a bauble in his hand. Bertuccio's position at the court of Manfredi is analogous to that of Touchstone at the court of Frederick, in "As You Like It."

III.—The Element of Deformity.

"A jealous, misanthropical, and irritable temper was his prominent characteristic. The sense of his deformity haunted him like a phantom, and the insults and scorn to which this exposed him had poisoned his heart with fierce and bitter feelings, which, from other points in his

character, do not appear to have been more largely infused into his original temperament than that of his fellow-men. * * * The heart and the doors that are shut against every other earthly being shall open to thee and to thy sorrows. * * * Look at every book which we have read — those excepted of that abstract philosophy which finds no responsive voice in our natural feelings. Is not personal form, such as at least can be tolerated without horror and disgust, always represented as essential to our ideas of a friend, far more a lover? Is not such a misshapen monster as I am excluded by the very fiat of Nature from her fairest enjoyments? * * * The scoff of the rabble and the sneer of the yet more vulgar of his own rank were to him agony and breaking on the wheel. * * * It was as if the last cable at which the vessel rode had suddenly parted, and left her abandoned to all the wild fury of the tempest."

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S NOVEL OF "THE BLACK DWARF."

IV.—SUBSTANCE AND DRIFT OF THE FOOL'S REVENGE.

The terror that subdues the mind and the pity that melts the heart unite in elevating the moral and spiritual tone of humanity. They make mankind more virtuous and more humane; and therein they exert an influence which blesses the world. Both these forces are aroused and stimulated by the tragedy of "The Fool's Revenge." It is a gloomy piece, but it is full of power. It is adroitly constructed, vigourously written, and animated by a swift, exciting, propulsive, and indomitable movement toward a climax; and it tells a terrible story of good and evil passions. Its main motive is to rebuke the wickedness of human vengeance. Its literary and dramatic substance consists in the analysis of an exceptional phase of human nature. It depicts the love, the suffering, the rage, the hate, the frenzy, the mingling of angel and demon, and — finally — the awful fate of a man of austere mind and tender heart shut up in a deformed body, and burdened with a tremendous experience of cruelty and anguish.

The tragedy, in its English transformation, is free from all the grossness of Victor Hugo's "Le Roi s'Amuse," upon which, remotely, it is based. Bertuccio, when first presented in it — as the Court Fool to Count Manfredi, the Lord of Faenza, — has suffered a pathetic bereavement. The poor creature remembers a happy home, wherein he was blessed with the love of an affectionate, faithful wife. That wife was torn from him, by a ruthless noble; and it is to avenge this outrage that Bertuccio now lives and labours. He has been crazed; but the cloud of lunacy has lifted, and the wreck of deformed manhood that now remains is

animated by one love, one hate, and one fearful purpose. The love is for his daughter; the hate is for his wronger; the purpose is revenge. The scheme that Bertuccio forms is to counsel his employer, Manfredi — a wicked, powerful, unscrupulous man — to abduct the wife of his arch-enemy, Count Malatesta. The first act of the drama shows the relations of these persons and the unfolding of this plot. The second act shows how, by a series of circumstances, strangely yet naturally contrived, the daughter of Bertuccio was substituted for the Countess Malatesta, and how the unfortunate Jester ignorantly became a party to the forcible carrying off of his own child. The third act depicts,— first his demoniac glee, in thinking over the consummation of his insane vengeance; then his paroxysms of anguish, consequent on the discovery of what has really chanced; and finally his rescue of his daughter, and his death.

Physical deformity has seldom been borne with patience. It reacts on the nature that it incloses. It saddens or it embitters. A deformed man is usually reticent and secretive. He shrinks from contact or observation. He suspects, on every hand, pity, contempt, aversion, or ridicule. He is morbidly sensitive. He withdraws his life from the obvious and sun-lit pathways of the world, and dwells in solitary and sequestered places; and there he nurses his emotions, whether of love or hate, till they acquire intense strength. If he be a man of deep heart and proud mind, and if his nature be illumined by the light of genius, he will develop an amazing individuality. Pope and Byron come out of literary history as ready examples of this truth. These, of course, are exponents of an exceptional class; but, as the same human nature runs through all classes, the same general results are apparent in all the victims of deformity. The deformed man is placed at a disadvantage, and the cruel fact shapes and colours his whole experience. That experience, accordingly, attracts the analytical student of life, and stimulates the imaginative literary artist, by suggesting sharp dramatic contrasts. Sir Walter Scott has delineated phases of it with great vigour of treatment, and in a singularly beautiful atmosphere of romance, in his novel of "The Black Dwarf." Other authors have touched upon it, with more or less success; but no other great writer seems to have brooded over it so deeply as Victor Hugo has, for the purposes of art. To remind the reader of his Quasimodo, is at once to illustrate this meaning and to suggest a representative embodiment of this exceptional individuality. Bertuccio is, in some respects, a companion portrait; and certainly one of the most affecting images in all literature of the misery that laughs.

NEW-YORK, October 26th, 1878. W. W.

BRUTUS

VOL. III

Preface.

✠

THIS version of "Brutus" presents much alteration of the tragedy from the form in which it stands among the authentic works of John Howard Payne. The changes originated, for the most part, with the once eminent and honoured tragedian, James Stark—now dead and at rest after many trials and sorrows. They were supplemented with further emendations, made by John McCullough,—from whom the Editor of this volume has derived several useful suggestions for the improvement of the piece,—and by Edwin Booth, whose choice of the text and whose stage-directions are herein pursued and embodied. In this version the tragedy opens with what, in the author's book, is the first scene of act second; proceeds with the first scene of act first and the third scene of act second; and ends its first act with the second scene of the first act of the original. Act second opens with the third scene of act first, and closes with the first scene—that of the imprecation upon Sextus—of act third. The first two acts are thus made to present all the important characters in clearly defined relations to each other and to the dramatic scheme; while the crime against Lucretia and the masquerade practised by Brutus are vividly displayed, and two endings are obtained, of prodigious strength, in which Brutus is the predominant

figure. The excisions include the second scene of the second act, in which Brutus bids Titus to renounce Tarquinia; the second scene of the fourth act, in which are explanatory colloquies that prove superfluous; and the latter part of the first scene of act fifth, in which the lovers are slowly parted, with lamentable and frantic words. Act third begins with Lucretia's dying speech and suicide—restored from the note to which they were banished by the author, after the first representation of the tragedy, in deference to a critical judgment of the time. "Brutus," the author intimates, was built upon the basis of seven earlier plays, illustrative of its subject. This Roman hero—if that be, indeed, the right word to designate a father who destroys his son for what, after all, was but a venial offence against the State—has been glorified by Downman, Cumberland, Lee, Duncombe, and others—all anterior to Payne. The world seems much to admire the virtue of which its humanity is incapable. Payne's "Brutus" was first acted, December 3, 1818, at Drury Lane, London, with Edmund Kean in the chief part. Its first representation in America occurred on March 15, 1819, at the Park Theatre, New-York, with James Pritchard as Brutus. Edwin Forrest, Junius Brutus Booth, and others, have since been seen in this character, on the American stage. The piece is valuable for its tumultuous action, for its splendid pictorial effects, for its moments of pathos, for its lofty ideal of patriotism, and for the apt strength with which it inculcates the awful holiness of chastity, the dignity of honour, and the value of freedom.

W. W.

New-York, July 4th, 1878.

Prologue to Brutus.

✠

Written by Rev. George Croly. Spoken by H. Kemble, at Drury Lane, December 3, 1818.

✠

Time rushes o'er us; thick as evening clouds,
Ages roll back:—what calls them from their shrouds?
What in full vision brings their good and great,
The men whose virtues make the nation's fate,
The far, forgotten stars of humankind?
The STAGE—the mighty telescope of mind!
If later, luckless arts that stage profane,
The actor pleads—not guilty of the stain:
He but the shadow flung on fashion's tide:
Yours the high will that all its waves must guide:
Your voice alone the great reform secures:
His but the passing hour—the age is yours.

Our pledge is kept. Here *yet* no chargers wheel,
No foreign slaves on ropes or scaffolds reel,
No Gallick amazons, half naked, climb
From pit to gallery—the low sublime!
In Shakespeare's halls shall dogs and bears engage?
Where brutes are actors be a booth the stage!
And we shall triumph yet. The cloud has hung
Darkly above—but day shall spring—has sprung:
The tempest has but swept, not shook the shrine;
No lamp that genius lit has ceased to shine!
Still lives its sanctity. Around the spot
Hover high spirits—shapes of burning thought—
Viewless; but call them, on the dazzled eye
Descends their pomp of immortality:

Here, at your voice, Rowe, Otway, Southern come
Flashing like meteors through the age's gloom.
Perpetual here—king of th' immortal band,
Sits SHAKESPEARE crowned. He lifts the golden wand,
And all obey;—the visions of the past
Rise as they lived—soft, splendid, regal, vast.
Then Ariel harps along the enchanted wave,
Then the weird sisters thunder in their cave;
The spell is wound. Then shows his mightier art
The Moor's lost soul; the hell of Richard's heart;
And stamps, in fiery warning to all time,
"The deep damnation" of a tyrant's crime.

To-night we take our lesson from the tomb:
'T is thy sad cenotaph, colossal Rome!

How is thy helmet cleft, thy banner low;
Ashes and dust are all thy glory now!
While o'er thy wreck a host of monks and slaves
Totter to "seek dishonourable graves."
The story is of Brutus: in that name
Towered to the sun her eagle's wing of flame!
When sank her liberty, that name of power
Poured hallowed splendours round its dying hour.
The lesson lived for man; that heavenward blaze
Fixed on the pile the world's eternal gaze.

Unrivalled England! to such memories thou
This hour dost owe the laurel on thy brow;
Those fixed, when earth was like a grave, thy tread,
Prophet and warrior, 'twixt the quick and dead:
Those bade thee war for man; those won the name
That crowns thee—famed above all Roman fame.

Now, to our scene—we feel no idle fear,
Sure of the hearts, the British justice here:
If we deserve it, sure of your applause—
Then, hear for Rome, for England, for "our cause."

"Brutus, who plucked the knife from Lucrece' side,
Seeing such emulation in their woe,
Began to clothe his wit in state and pride,
Burying in Lucrece' wound his folly's show.
He with the Romans was esteemèd so
As silly, jeering idiots are with kings,
For sportive words, and uttering foolish things.

"But now he throws that shallow habit by,
Wherein deep policy did him disguise;
And armed his long-hid wits advisedly,
To check the tears in Collatinus' eyes.
'Thou wrongèd lord of Rome,' quoth he, 'arise;
Let my unsounded self, supposed a fool,
Now set thy long-experienced wit to school. . . .

"'Courageous Roman, do not steep thy heart
In such relenting dew of lamentations:
But kneel with me, and help to bear thy part,
To rouse our Roman gods with invocations,
That they will suffer these abominations,
[Since Rome herself in them doth stand disgraced],
By our strong arms from forth her fair streets chased.

"'Now by the Capitol that we adore,
And by this chaste blood so unjustly stained,
By heaven's fair sun, that breeds the fat earth's store,
By all our country rights in Rome maintained,
And by chaste Lucrece' soul, that late complained
Her wrongs to us, and by this bloody knife,
We will revenge the death of this true wife.'

"This said, he struck his hand upon his breast,
And kissed the fatal knife, to end his vow,
And to his protestation urged the rest,
Who, wondering at him, did his words allow:
Then jointly to the ground their knees they bow,
And that deep vow which Brutus made before,
He doth again repeat, and that they swore."

SHAKESPEARE.

Persons Represented.

✠

SEXTUS,
ARUNS,
CLAUDIUS, } *Sons to Tarquin The Proud, King of Rome.*

COLLATINUS.

LUCIUS JUNIUS, *surnamed* BRUTUS.

TITUS, *Son to Lucius Junius.*

VALERIUS,
LUCRETIUS,
HORATIUS, } *Roman Patricians.*

CORUNNA, *a Roman General.*

A CENTURION.

A MESSENGER.

FIRST ROMAN.

SECOND ROMAN.

THIRD ROMAN.

TULLIA, *Wife to Tarquin, and Queen of Rome.*

TARQUINIA, *Daughter to Tullia.*

LUCRETIA, *Wife to Collatinus, and Daughter to Lucretius.*

LAVINIA, *Maid to Lucretia.*

PRIESTESS OF RHEA.

A VESTAL.

LICTORS, SOLDIERS, CITIZENS, ATTENDANTS, VESTALS, ETC.

Place and Time.

✠

SCENE.—*In Rome; in Collatia; and in the Camp before Ardea.*

PERIOD.—*509 B. C.*

TIME OF ACTION.—*About four days.*

BRUTUS;

OR, THE FALL OF TARQUIN.

✠

Act First.

Scene First. THE TENT OF SEXTUS, IN THE CAMP, BEFORE ARDEA. TABLE SPREAD FOR BANQUET. SEXTUS, ARUNS, CLAUDIUS, AND COLLATINUS DISCOVERED, FEASTING.

Sex.

Come, then, here 's to the fairest nymph in Italy,
And she 's in Rome.

Aruns.

Here 's to the fairest nymph in Italy;
And she is not in Rome.

Sex.

Where is she, then?

Aruns.

Ask Collatine; he 'll swear she 's at Collatia.

Sex.

His wife!

Aruns.

Even so.

Clau.

Is it so, Collatine?
Well, 't is praiseworthy, in this vicious age,
To see a young man true to his own spouse.

O, 't is a vicious age! When I behold
One who is bold enough to steer against
The wind of tide and custom, I behold him
With veneration. 'T is a vicious age!

Col.

Laugh on, though I 'm the subject! If to love
My wife 's ridiculous, I 'll join the laugh;
Though I 'll not say if I laugh at, or with you!

Aruns.

The conscious wood was witness to his sighs,
The conscious Dryads wiped their watery eyes,
For they beheld the wight forlorn, to-day,
And so did I;—but I shall not betray.
Here now he is, however, thanks to me;—
That is, his semblance, for his soul dwells hence.
How was it when you parted? She: "My love,
Fear not, good sooth, I 'll very constant prove."
[*Spoken in satirical mimicry.*
He: "So will I, for wheresoe'er I steer,
'T is but my mortal clay; my soul is here."
[*All laugh except Collatinus.*

Sex.

And prithee, Collatine, in what array
Did the god Hymen come to thee? how dressed,
And how equipped? I fear me much he left
His torch behind, so that thou couldst not see
A fault in thy beloved; or was the blaze
So burning bright that thy bedazzled eyes
Have since refused their office?

Col.

And doth Sextus
Judge by his own experience, then, of others?
To him, I make no doubt, hath Hymen's torch
Discovered faults enough; what pity 't was
He had not likewise brought i' th' other hand
A mirror, where the prince might read himself.

Sex.

I like thee now: thou 'rt gay, and I 'll be grave.
As to those dear, delicious creatures, women,
Hear what my own experience has taught me:
I 've ever found 'em fickle, artful, amorous,
Fruitful in schemes to please their changeful fancies,
And fruitful in resources when discovered.
They love unceasingly, they never change—
O, never!—no!—excepting in the object.
Love of new faces is their first great passion;
Then love of riches, grandeur, and attention.
Knowing all this, I seek not constancy,
But, to anticipate their wishes, rove,
Humour their darling passion, and am blest.

Col.

This is the common cant—the stale, gross, idle,
Unmeaning jargon—of all those, who, conscious
Of their own littleness of soul, avoid
With timid eye the face of modest virtue;
Who, mingling only with the base, and flushed
With triumphs over those they dare attack,
The weak, the forward, or depraved, declare—
And fain would make their shallow notions current—
That womankind are all alike, and hoot
At virtue, wheresoe'er she passes by them.
I have seen sparks like these, and I have seen
A little worthless village cur all night
Bay with incessant noise the silver moon,
While she, serene, throned in her pearlèd car,
Sailed in full state along: but Sextus' judgment
Owns not his words, and the resemblance glances
On others, not on him.

Sex.

Let it glance where and upon whom it will,
Sextus is mighty careless of the matter.
Now hear what I have seen. I 've seen young men,
Who, having fancied they have found perfection ——

Col.

Sextus, no more—lest I forget myself,
And thee. I tell thee, prince —— [*All rise.*

Aruns.

Nay, hold!
Sextus, you go too far.

Sex.

Why, pray, good sir, may I not praise the wife
Of this same testy, froward husband here,
But on his cheek offence must quivering sit,
And fancied insult?—the abortive child
Of misconstruction, whose near-sighted eye
Discerns not jest from real!

Col.

I heed you not—jest on; I 'll aid your humour:
Let Aruns use me for his princely laughter,
Let Claudius deck me with ironic praise;
But when you touch a nearer, dearer subject—
Perish the man, nay, may he doubly perish,
Who can sit still, and hear, with skulking coolness,
The least abuse, or shadow of a slight,
Cast on the woman whom he loves!

Aruns.

If that a man might dare to ope his lips
When Collatinus frowns, I would presume
To say one word in praise of my own wife;
And I will say, could our eyes stretch to Rome,
In spite of the perfections of Lucretia,
My wife, who loves her fireside, and hates gadding,
Would prove far otherwise employed—and better,
Ay, better, as a woman, than the deity
Residing at Collatia.

Sex. [*Aside.*

Well timed! I 'll seize the occasion,
View this Lucretia ere I sleep, and satisfy

My senses whether fame has told the truth.
I 'll stake my life on 't—let us mount our horses,
[*To Collatinus.*
And post away this instant towards Rome—
That we shall find thy wife, and his, and his,
Making the most of this, their liberty.
Why, 't is the sex: enjoying to the full
The swing of licence which their husbands' absence
Affords. I 'll stake my life that this is true,
And that my own—ill as I may deserve it—
Knows her state best, keeps best within the bounds
Her matron duties claim; that she 's at home,
While yours are feasting at their neighbours' houses.
What say'st thou, Collatine, on rioting at home?

Col.

Had I two lives, I 'd stake them on the trial,
Nor fear to live both out.

Sex.

Let us away.
Come, come, my Collatinus, droop not thus,
Be gay.

Col.

I am not sad ——

Sex.

But fearful for th' event.

Col.

Not in the least.

Sex.

A little.

Col.

Not a whit:
You do not know Lucretia.

Sex.

But we shall.
Let 's lose no time. Come, brothers, let 's away!
[*Exeunt.—Change.*

Scene Second. { A STREET IN ROME. ENTER VALERIUS AND LUCRETIUS.

Val.

Words are too feeble to express the horror
With which my soul revolts against this Tarquin.
By poison he obtained his brother's wife;
Then by a baser murder grasped the crown.
These eyes beheld the aged monarch thrown
Down from the Senate-House, his feeble limbs
Bruised by the pavement, his time-honoured locks,
Which from the very robber would have gained
Respect and veneration, bathed in blood:
With difficulty raised, and tottering homeward,—
The murderers followed—struck him—and he died.

Lucretius.

Inexpiable crime!

Val.

High in her regal chariot Tullia came.
The corse lay in the street: the charioteer
Tugged back the steeds in horror. "On, slave, on!
Shall dead men stop my passage to a throne?"
Exclaimed the parricide. The gore was dashed
From the hot wheels up to her diadem.

Lucretius.

And heaven's avenging lightnings were withheld.
Here rules this Tullia, while the king, her husband,
Wastes our best blood in giddy, guilty war.
Spirit of Marcus Junius! would the gods
Deign to diffuse thy daring through the land,
Rome from her trance with giant spirit would start,
Dash off her fetters, and amaze the world.

Val.

Junius, didst say? O, tyranny long since
Had sunk, chained—buried, in its native hell!
But Tarquin, trembling at his virtues, murdered

Him and his elder son. The younger, Lucius,
Then on his travels, 'scaped the tyrant's sword,
But lost his reason at their fearful fall.

Lucretius.

Ay, the same Lucius, who now dwells with Tarquin,
The jest, the fool, the laughing-stock o' th' court—
Whom the young princes always carry with 'em
To be the butt of their unfeeling mirth.

Val.

Hold! I hear steps. Great things may yet be done,
If we are men and faithful to our country.
[*Exeunt.—Change.*

Scene Third. COLLATIA. THE HOUSE OF COLLATINUS. A ROOM, LIGHTED. LUCRETIA, WITH LAVINIA AND OTHER ATTENDANT LADIES, DISCOVERED. ALL ARE AT WORK ON EMBROIDERY, ETC.

Lucretia.

How long is it, Lavinia, since my lord
Hath changed his peaceful mansion for the camp
And restless scenes of war?

Lav.

Why, in my simple estimation, madam,
'T is some ten days or thereabout, for time
Runs as it should with me; in yours, it may be
Perhaps ten years.

Lucretia.

I do not understand thee:
Say 'st thou with me time runs not as it should?
Explain thy meaning: what should make thee think so?

Lav.

All that I mean is, that if I were married,
And that my husband were called forth to the wars,
I should not stray through the grove next my house,
Invoke the pensive solitude, and woo
The dull and silent melancholy; brood
O'er my own thoughts, alone; or keep myself
Within my house mewed up, a prisoner.
'T is for philosophers to love retirement.
Women were not made
To stand cooped up like statues in a niche,
Or feed on their own secret contemplations.

Lucretia.

Go to—thou know'st not what thou say'st, Lavinia.
I thank the gods, who taught me that the mind,
Possessed of conscious virtue, is more rich
Than all the sunless hoards which Plutus boasts;
And that the chiefest glory of a woman
Is in retirement; that her highest comfort
Results from home-born and domestic joys;
The noblest treasure a deserving husband,
Who, not a prisoner to the eye alone,
A fair complexion or melodious voice,
Shall read her deeper; nor shall time, which palls
The rage of passion, shake his ardent love—
Increasing by possession. This,—again I thank
The gracious gods,—this husband too is mine!
Soft—I hear footsteps. Hour of rapture! look!
My love, my life, my Collatinus comes.

[*Enter Collatinus, Claudius, Aruns, and Sextus* L. I. E.

My lord, most welcome!

Col.

Welcome these, my friends,
Lucretia!—our right royal master's sons.
Passing this way, I have prevailed with them
To grace our humble mansion.

Lucretia.

Welcome yourself,
And doubly welcome, that you bring such friends.
Haste, maidens, haste, make ready for our guests!
[*Exeunt Lavinia, and other ladies* R.
My heart is full of joy!

Aruns.

Rather, fair lady,
You should be angry that unseasonably,
And with abrupt intrusion, we 've thus broke
Upon your privacy.

Lucretia.

No, my good lord;
Those to whom love and my respect are due
Can ne'er intrude upon me; had I known
This visit, you, perhaps, might have been treated
With better cheer, not a more kind reception.
This evening little did I think my house
Would have possessed such lodgers.

Clau.

Rather, lady,
Such birds of passage; we must hence to-night.

Lucretia.

To-night? doth not my lord say no to that?

Col.

I would, Lucretia; but it cannot be.
If aught the house affords, my dearest love,
To set before your guests, I pray prepare it:
We must be at the camp ere morning dawn.
An hour or two will be the utmost limit
Allowed us here.

Lucretia.

With all the speed I can,
I 'll play the caterer; though I am tempted,

Would that delay your journey, to be tardy,
And prove a sluggish housewife. [*Exit* R.

Sex.

This is indeed a wife! Here the dispute
Must end;
And, Collatinus, we must yield to thee!

Aruns.

I will not envy thee; but 't is a wife
Of wives,—a precious diamond, picked
From out the common pebbles. To have found her
At work among her maids at this late hour,
And not displeased at our rude interruption!
Not to squeeze out a lame apology,
As, "I am quite ashamed—so unprepared—
Who could have thought—would I had known of it!"
And such like tacit hints, to tell her guests
She wishes them away! Thou 'rt happy, Collatine.

Col.

Enough, enough!
The gods forbid I should affect indifference,
And say you flatter me. I am most happy.
But Sextus heeds us not; he seems quite lost.

Sex.

Pray, pardon me:
My mind was in the camp. How wine could heat us
To such a mad exploit, at such a time,
Is shameful to reflect on: let us mount
This instant, and return.

Col.

Now we are here,
We shall encroach but little on our time,
If we partake the slender fare together
Which will, by this, await us. Pray, my lords,
This way.

Sex.

Along! I 'll follow straight.

[*Exeunt Collatinus, Aruns, and Claudius* R.

Had she staid here till now, I should have done
Nothing but gaze.
But there 's no hope! Her face,
Her look, her eye, her manners, speak a heart
Unknowing of deceit; a soul of honour,
Where frozen chastity hath fixed her throne,
And unpolluted nuptial sanctity.
Peace, undigested thoughts! down, down—till ripened
By further time, ye bloom!

[*Exit* R.—*Scene changes.*

Scene Fourth.—THE CAMP, BEFORE ARDEA.

[*Enter Claudius and Aruns, laughing.*

Aruns.

There is no doctor for the spleen like Lucius.
What precious scenes of folly did he act
When, lately, through the glorious land of Greece,
He went with us to Delphi! But behold,
Where, full of business, his wise worship comes.

[*Enter Lucius Junius, surnamed Brutus.—This name is bestowed upon him by Tullia, in the first scene of the Second Act.*

Clau.

Whither so fast, good Junius, tell us whither?

Luc. Jun.

To Rome, to Rome—the queen demands my presence.
The state needs aid, and I am called to court.

[*Claudius and Aruns laugh.*

Am I a fool? If so, you cannot say
I 'm the first fool graced by a monarch's favour.

Aruns.

Why, Junius, travel has improved thy wit.
Thou speakest shrewdly.

Luc. Jun.

Do I so, my lord?
I 'm always glad when you and I agree;
You have just such a wit as I should choose.
Would I could purchase such! though it might split
My head, as confined air does — water bubbles!

Clau.

How say you? Purchase? Prithee, what wouldst give?

Luc. Jun.

What would I give? — ten acres of my land.

Aruns.

Thy land! Where lies it?

Luc. Jun.

Ask the king, my cousin:
He knows full well. I thank him, he 's my steward,
And takes the trouble off my hands.

Clau.

Who told thee so?

Luc. Jun.

The king himself. Now twenty years are past,
Or more, since he sent for me from my farm.
" Kinsman," said he, with a kind, gracious smile,
" For the black crime of treason which was charged
Against thy father and thy elder brother,
Their lives have paid: for thee, as I love mercy,
Live and be happy: simple is thy mind ——"

Aruns.

True, kinsman, true—i' faith, 't is wondrous simple.

Luc. Jun.

"And that simplicity will be a pledge
That thou wilt never plot against thy sovereign."

Clau.

Indeed, for that I 'll be thy bondsman, Junius.

Luc. Jun.

"Live in my house, companion of my children.
As for thy land, to ease thee of all care,
I 'll take it for thy use; all that I ask
Of thee is gratitude."

Aruns.

And art thou not
Grateful for goodness so unmerited?

Luc. Jun.

Am I not? Never, by the holy gods,
Will I forget it! 'T is my constant prayer
To heaven, that I may one day have the power
To pay the debt I owe him. But stay, stay —
I brought a message to you from the king.

Aruns.

Thank the gods, then, for thy good memory, fool!

Luc. Jun.

The king, your father, sends for you to council,
Where he debates how best to conquer Ardea.
Shall I before, and tell him ye are coming?

Clau.

Ay, or behind, or with us, or stay here,
As thy wits prompt, as suits thy lofty pleasure.

[*Exeunt Aruns and Claudius, laughing.*

Luc. Jun.

Yet, 't is not that which ruffles me: the gibes
And scornful mockeries of ill-governed youth,
Or flouts of dastard sycophants and jesters —
Reptiles, who lay their bellies in the dust
Before the frown of majesty: — all this
I but expect, nor grudge to bear; the face
I carry courts it! Son of Marcus Junius,
When will the tedious gods permit thy soul
To walk abroad in her own majesty,
And throw this vizor of thy madness from thee,
To avenge my father's and my brother's murder? —
And sweet, I must confess, would be the draught! —
Had this been all, a thousand opportunities
I 've had to strike the blow, and my own life
I had not valued as a rush; but still
There 's something nobler to be done! — My soul,
Enjoy the strong conception! — O, 't is glorious
To free a groaning country —
To see Revenge
Spring like a lion from the den, and tear
These hunters of mankind. Grant but the time,
Grant but the moment, gods! If I am wanting,
May I drag out this idiot-feignèd life
To late old age, and may posterity
Ne'er hear of Junius but as Tarquin's fool!

CURTAIN.

Act Second.

Scene First. { ROME. AN APARTMENT OF STATE IN THE PALACE OF TULLIA.

[*Enter Tullia, preceded by Guards, Ladies, and other Attendants, and followed by Valerius.*

Tul. [*Aside.*

Why should the steady mind to shadows yield?
And yet this vision shakes my frame with horror!
I thought his spirit thundered in my ear,
"Remember when, with wild ambition's frenzy
And all Rome's empire in your view, you drove
Your chariot-wheels o'er your dead father's body,
Up to the shouting Forum!" Why, my soul,
Dost thou not shun remembrance of that hour?
'T was but the cause, the cause; for this base clay,—
How differs it from the dull earth we tread on,
When the life 's gone? But next, the Sibyl came,
Whose mystic book at such a price we bought,
And cried, "The race of Tarquin shall be kings
Till a fool drive them hence, and set Rome free!"
Strange prophecy! What fool? It cannot be
That poor dolt, the companion of my sons!
Hark thee, Valerius; know'st thou that same fool
[*To Valerius.*
Now in the camp?

Val.

I know him well,—a man
Who, when he had a name, was Lucius Junius:
A braver citizen Rome never boasted,
And wise and learned withal; now changed, alas!—
A spectacle which humbles me to look on!

Tul.

But is he harmless in his moody humours?

Val.

Tame as my horse, which, though devoid of reason,
Shall turn, shall stop, and at my angry bidding
Shall kneel till I am thronèd on his back!
And this shall Junius: the like instinct stirs
Junius and him; no more.

Tul. [*Aside.*

Hence, idle fears!
Yet, when he went to Delphi, 't is given out
The oracle addressed him with strange portents;
And each night since my dreams have been disturbed
By a wild form, too much resembling his,
Leading our soldiers forth with sword and flame,
Revolters from the camp, to storm the palace.
But he is sent from thence, and shall be watched.

[*Enter Horatius* L.

Horatius.

Your orders are obeyed: Lucius awaits.

Tul.

Set him before us. [*Exit Horatius* L.
Tell me, will he answer [*To Valerius.*
If we do question him?

Val.

I think he will:
Yet sometimes, when the moody fit doth take him,
He will not speak for days; yea, rather starve
Than utter nature's cravings; then, anon
He 'll prattle shrewdly, with such witty folly
As almost betters reason.

[*Horatius returns with Lucius Junius* L.

Tul.

Hark thee, fellow,
How art thou called?

Luc. Jun.

A fool.

Tul.

Fool, for thy nature
Thou answerest well; but I demand thy name.

Luc. Jun.

Nothing but fool.

Tul.

His faculties are brutish. [*Aside.*
Brutus shall be thy name. [*To Lucius Junius.*

Bru.

Thanks to your grace.

Horatius.

Dost like thy new name, gentle brute?

Bru.

So well,
Who will may take the fool, I care not who—
Your highness, an' it like you.

Horatius.

I the fool!
Sirrah, good words, or I will have thee beaten.

Bru.

A fool thou wilt not beat, a brute thou dar'st not,
For the dull ass will kick against his striker,
If struck too harshly.

Tul.

Let me hear no more;
There 's mischief in his folly. Send him hence.
But stay, I 'll search him further. Hark thee, Brutus:
Thou wast at Delphi, with our sons the princes;
Tell me what questions put they to Apollo?
[*All give eager attention to this.*

Bru.

Your sons did ask who should be chief in Rome.

Tul.

Ha! What replied the oracle to that?

Bru.

With pains and strugglings the prophetic dame
This destiny reported from her god:
"Great and most glorious shall that Roman be,
Who first shall greet his mother with a kiss."

Tul.

That is fulfilled by Sextus.

Horatius.

Ay, he straight
Hastened from thence and kissed the queen his mother.

Bru.

Woe for me, I have no mother!
And yet I kissed her first.

Tul.

Thou kissed her? Thou?

Bru.

Yea, madam; for just then my foot did slip
In the fresh blood of a new-slaughtered victim,
And, falling, I did kiss my mother—earth. [*All start.*

Tul.

O, that the earth had swallowed thee outright
Till thou hadst kissed the centre! I perceive,
The gods are leagued with folly to destroy us.
My very blood chills at my heart. Away!

[*Flourish. Exeunt Tullia and Attendants* C.

Horatius.

Hark thee, thou Brutus. I in part suspect
Thou ap'st this folly; if I find thee trifling
Or juggling with the Pythia for predictions,
By all the gods, I 'll have thee flayed, thy skin
Stripped into thongs, to strangle thee withal.
Dissembling varlet! [*Strikes Brutus, who seizes him.*
[*Horatius draws dagger.*

Val.

Shame, my lord! forbear!
Threat'ning a fool, you do but wrong yourself.

Horatius.

But that the princes love his son, brave Titus,
My dagger should have pierced his throat ere now
And sent him to his mother earth forever!
He shall be watched. Come, come with me, Valerius.
[*Exit* C.

Val.

The gods restore thee, Brutus, to thyself,
And us to thee! [*Exit* C.

Bru.

A little longer,
A little longer yet support me, patience!
The day draws on: it presses to the birth,
I see it in the forming womb of time,—
The embryo liberty. Ha, 't is my son!
Down, rebel nature, down!
[*Enter Titus* R. 1. E.

Tit.

Welcome to Rome!
Would I might welcome thee to reason, too!

Bru.

Give me thy hand—nay, give it me.

Tit.

What wouldst thou?
Speak to thy son.

Bru.

I had a thing to say,
But I have lost it. Let it pass; no matter.

Tit.

Look not upon me with those eyes, but speak;
What is it that annoys thee? tell thy friend:
How can I serve thee? What dost lack?

Bru.

Preferment.
Thou canst do much at court.

Tit.

Ah, this is nothing!

Bru.

So much the fitter for a fool's petition,
And a court promise.

Tit.

O, this trifling racks me.

Bru.

Lend me thine ear: I 'll tell a secret to thee
Worth a whole city's ransom. This it is—
Nay, ponder it, and lock it in thy heart—
There are more fools, my son, in this wise world,
Than the gods ever made.

Tit.

Say'st thou, my father?
Expound this riddle. If thy mind doth harbour
Aught that imports a son like me to know,
Or, knowing, to achieve, declare it.

Bru.

Now, my son,
Should the great gods, who made me what thou see'st,
Repent, and in their vengeance cast upon me
The burden of my senses back again,
What wouldst thou say?

Tit.

O, my lamented father,
Would the kind gods restore thee to thy reason ——

Bru.

Then, Titus, then I should be mad with reason.
Had I the sense to know myself a Roman,
This hand should tear this heart from out my ribs,
Ere it should own allegiance to a tyrant.
If, therefore, thou dost love me, pray the gods
To keep me what I am. Where all are slaves,
None but the fool is happy.

Tit.

We are Romans,
Not slaves ——

Bru.

Not slaves? Why, what art thou?

Tit.

Thy son.
Dost thou not know me?

Bru.

You abuse my folly.
I know thee not. Wert thou my son, ye gods,
Thou wouldst tear off this sycophantic robe,
Tuck up thy tunic, trim these curlèd locks
To the short warrior-cut, vault on thy steed;
Then, scouring through the city, call to arms,
And shout for liberty!

Tit. [*Starts.*

Defend me, gods!

Bru.

Ha! does it stagger thee?

Tit.

For liberty?
Said'st thou for liberty? It cannot be.

Bru.

Indeed! 'T is well — no more.

Tit.

What would my father?

Bru.

Begone! you trouble me.

Tit.

Nay, do not scorn me.

Bru.

Said I, for liberty? I said it not:
The awful word, breathed in a coward's ear,
Were sacrilege to utter. Hence, begone!
Said I you were my son? 'T is false; I 'm foolish;
My brain is weak, and wanders; you abuse it.

Tit.

Ah, do not leave me; not in anger leave me.

Bru.

Anger? What 's that? I am content with folly:
Anger is madness, and above my aim! [*Music heard.*
Hark! here is music for thee,—food for love,—
And beauty to serve in the rich repast.
Tarquinia comes. Go, worship the bright sun,
And let poor Brutus wither in the shade. [*Exit* L. 1. E.

Tit.

O, truly said! bright as the golden sun
Tarquinia's beauty beams, and I adore!

[*Tarquinia enters, preceded by Women bearing a crown of gold, together with palms for the ceremonial of a dedication to Fortune.*

What dedication, or what holy service,
Doth the fair client of the gods provide?
In the celestial synod is there one
Who will not listen to Tarquinia's prayer?

Tar.

I go to Fortune's temple, to suspend
Upon the votive shrine this golden crown.
While incense fills the fane, and holy hymns
Are chaunted for my brother's safe return,
What shall I ask for Titus?

Tit.

Though the goddess
In her blind bounty should unthrone the world
To build me one vast empire, my ambition,
If by thy love unblest, would slight the gift:
Therefore of Fortune I have nought to ask;
She hath no interest in Tarquinia's heart;
Nature, not Fortune, must befriend me there.

Tar.

Thy gentle manners, Titus, have endeared thee,
Although a subject Roman, to Tarquinia.
My brother Sextus wears thee next his heart;
The queen herself, of all our courtly youth,
First in her favour holds the noble Titus;
And, though my noble father well may keep
A jealous eye upon thy Junian race,—
A race unfriendly to the name of king,—
Yet thee he cherishes: with generous joy
The monarch sees thy early virtue shoot,
And, with a parent's fondness, rears its growth.

Tit.

O, neither name, nor nature, nor the voice
Of my lost father, could he wake to reason,
Not all the wrongs that tyranny could pile
On my afflicted head, not all the praise
That patriot gratitude could shower upon me,
Can shake the faithful purpose of my soul,
To sever it from love and my Tarquinia.

Tar.

Approve that firmness in the shock of trial,
And, if my love can recompense thy virtue,

Nor tortures, nor temptations, nor the wreck
Of Rome and empire shall divide me from thee.
To this I pledge my hand. Now to the temple.
[*Music.—Exeunt* C.—*Scene changes.*

Scene Second. { ROME. THE CAPITOL. EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF TARQUIN THE PROUD, C. NIGHT. THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.

[*Enter Brutus.*

Bru.

Slumber forsakes me, and I court the horrors
Which night and tempest swell on every side.
Launch forth thy thunders, Capitolian Jove!
Put fire into the languid souls of men;
Let loose thy ministers of wrath amongst them,
And crush the vile oppressor! Strike him down,
Ye lightnings! Lay his trophies in the dust!
[*Storm increases.*
Ha! this is well! Flash, ye blue-forked fires!
Loud-bursting thunders, roar! and tremble, earth!
[*Loud peal of thunder. The statue of Tarquin is struck by a flash of lightning, is shattered to pieces, and falls in fragments.*
What! fallen at last, proud idol, struck to earth!
I thank you, gods! I thank you! When you point
Your shafts at human pride, it is not chance,
'T is wisdom levels the commissioned blow.
But I — a thing of no account — a slave —
I to your forkèd lightnings bare my bosom
In vain, for what 's a slave — a dastard slave —
A fool, a Brutus?
[*Sounds of tempest very loud.*
Hark! the storm rides on,
The scolding winds drive through the clattering rain,

And loudly screams the haggard witch of night.
Strange hopes possess my soul: my thoughts grow wild,
Engender with the scene, and pant for action.
With your leave, majesty, I 'll sit beside you,
And ruminate awhile. [*Sits on a fragment of the statue.*
O, for a cause! A cause, ye mighty gods!
Soft, what stir is this?

[*Enter Valerius, followed by a Messenger* L. U. E.

Val.

What! Collatinus sent for, didst thou say?

Mess.

Ay, Collatinus, thou, and all her kinsmen,
To come upon the instant to Collatia;
She will take no denial. Time is precious,
And I must hasten forth to bring her husband. [*Exit* R.

Bru. [*Aside.*

Ha! Collatinus and Lucretia's kinsmen!
There 's something sure in this. Valerius, too!
Well met. Now will I put him to the test.
Valerius, ho!

Val. [*Turning back.*

Who calls me?

Bru.

Brutus.

Val.

Go,
Get thee to bed! [*Valerius is departing* R.

Bru.

Valerius!

Val.

Peace,
Thou foolish thing! Why dost thou call so loud?

Bru.

Because I will be heard! The time may come
When thou may'st want a fool.

Val.

Prithee, begone!
I have no time to hear thy prattle now.

Bru.

By Hercules, but you must hear. [*Seizing his arm.*

Val.

You 'll anger me.

Bru.

Waste not your noble anger on a fool!
'T were a brave passion in a better cause.

Val.

Thy folly 's cause enough.

Bru.

Rail not at folly,
There 's but one wise, and him the gods have killed.

Val.

Killed? Whom? [*Thunder.*

Bru.

[*Pointing to the shattered statue.*

Behold!
O, sight of pity! Majesty in ruins!
Down on your knees, down to your kingly idol!

Val.

Let slaves and sycophants do that. Not I!

Bru.

Wilt thou not kneel?

Val.

Begone;
Valerius kneels not to the living Tarquin.

Bru.

Indeed! Belike you wish him laid as low?

Val.

What if I do? [*Thunder.*

Bru.

Jove tells thee what to do! Strike!
O, the difference 'twixt Jove's wrath and thine!
He, at the crownèd tyrant aims his shaft;
Thou, mighty man, wouldst frown a fool to silence,
And spurn poor Brutus from thee.

Val.

What is this?
Let me look nearer at thee. Is thy mind,
That long-lost jewel, found? and Lucius Junius,
Dear to my heart, restored? Or art thou Brutus,
The scoff and jest of Rome, and this a fit
Of intermittent reason?

Bru.

I am Brutus!
Folly, be thou my goddess! I am Brutus,
If thou wilt use me so; if not, farewell!
Why dost thou pause? Look on me! I have limbs,
Parts and proportions, shoulders strong to bear,
And hands not slow to strike! What more than Brutus
Could Lucius Junius do?

Val.

A cause like ours
Asks both the strength of Brutus, and the wisdom
Of Lucius Junius. [*Noise outside.*

Bru.

No more—we 're interrupted.

Val.

Farewell. Hereafter, we 'll discourse.
And may the gods confirm the hope you 've raised! [*Exit.*

Bru.

My soul expands! My spirit swells within me,
As if the glorious moment were at hand!

Sure this is Sextus. Why has he left the camp—
Alone—and muffled?
[*Enter Sextus* R. U. E., *wrapped in a mantle.*
Welcome, gentle prince!

Sex.

Ha! Brutus here!—unhoused amid the storm?

Bru.

Whence com'st thou, prince? from battle? from the camp?

Sex.

Not from the camp, good Brutus—from Collatia—
The camp of Venus, not of Mars, good Brutus.

Bru.

Ha!

Sex.

Why dost thou start? Thy kinswoman, Lucretia——

Bru.

Well, what of her? speak!

Sex.

Ay, I will speak,
And I 'll speak that shall fill thee with more wonder
Than all the lying oracle declared.

Bru.

Nay, prince, not so; you cannot do a deed
To make me wonder.

Sex.

Indeed! Dost think it?
Then let me tell thee, Brutus: wild with passion
For this famed matron,—though we met but once,—
Last night I stole in secret from the camp,
Where, in security, I left her husband.
She was alone. I said affairs of consequence
Had brought me to Collatia. She received me
As the king's son, and as her husband's friend——

Bru. [*Aside.*

Patience, O heart! — a moment longer, patience!

Sex.

When midnight came, I crept into her chamber ——

Bru. [*Aside.*

Inhuman monster!

Sex.

Alarmed and frantic,
She shrieked out, "Collatinus! Husband! Help!"
A slave rushed in — I sprung upon the caitiff,
And drove my dagger through his clamorous throat;
Then, turning to Lucretia, now half dead
With terror, swore, by all the gods, at once,
If she resisted, to the heart I 'd stab her;
Yoke her fair body to the dying slave,
And fix pollution to her name forever!

Bru.

And — and — the matron? —

Sex.

Was mine! was mine!

Bru.

The furies curse you, then! lash you with snakes!
When forth you walk, may the red flaming sun
Strike you with livid plagues!
Vipers that die not slowly gnaw your heart!
May earth be to you but one wilderness!
May you hate yourself,
For death pray hourly, yet be in tortures
Millions of years expiring!

Sex.

Amazement! What can mean this sudden frenzy?

Bru.

What? Violation! Do we dwell in dens,
In caverned rocks, or amongst men, in Rome?
[*Thunder and lightning very loud.*
Hear the loud curse of heaven! 'T is not for nothing
The thunderer keeps this coil above your head!
Look on that ruin! See your father's statue
Unhorsed and headless! Tremble at the omen!

Sex.

This is not madness. Ha! my dagger lost!
Wretch! thou shalt not escape me. Ho! a guard!
The rack shall punish thee. A guard, I say! [*Exit* L.

Bru.

The blow is struck! the anxious messages
To Collatinus and his friends explained:
And now, Rome's liberty or loss is certain!
I 'll hasten to Collatia, join my kinsmen.
To the moon, folly! Vengeance, I embrace thee!
[*Exit* R. 1. E.

CURTAIN.

Act Third.

Scene First. { COLLATIA. APARTMENT IN THE HOUSE OF COLLATINUS. LUCRETIA, COLLATINUS, LUCRETIUS, VALERIUS, LADIES AND ATTENDANTS, DISCOVERED.

Lucretia.

Bear witness, then, Lucretia's mind is guiltless;
Yet never can Lucretia smile again.
Lost to herself, her husband, and her child;
Lost to the world, her country, and her friends;
The arms of love can pillow her no more,
And the sweet smile of her dear innocent babe
Would but awaken her to deeper anguish.
And shall she live, bereft of all life's treasures,
The spectre of the past forever rising
To fright her into madness? Think not, countrymen,
Indignant virtue can survive pollution.
By her own hand a Roman wife can fall. [*Stabs herself.*
'T is to the heart! Tarquin, the blow was thine! [*Falls.*

Col.

Beloved, unhappy wife! What hast thou done?

Lucretia.

A deed of glory. Now, my husband, now
With transport can I press thee to my bosom.
Father and kinsmen, ye can own me now!
My pure soul springs from its detested prison!
Virtue exults! The gods applaud my daring!
And to our dear, loved babe, I can bequeath
A mother's noblest gift—a spotless name! [*Dies.*

Lucretius.

Staff of my age — gone, gone, forever gone!
A wretched father's last and only joy!
Come, death, strike here; your shaft were welcome now!
Snatch me from earth to my poor, lost, loved child!

Col.

My wife! my wife! Dear, dear, wronged, murdered wife!
Let me be rooted here in endless sorrow.
Who, who shall dare to mourn her loss like me?

[*Enter Brutus* L. 1. E.

Bru.

I dare! [*All start.*
And so dare every honest Roman.

Lucretius.

Whence comes this mad intrusion? Hence, begone!

Bru.

The noble spirit fled! How died Lucretia?

Val.

By her own hand she died!

Bru.

Heroic matron!
Now, now the hour is come! By this one blow
Her name 's immortal, and her country saved.
Hail! dawn of glory! [*Snatching the dagger.*
Hail, thou sacred weapon!
Virtue's deliverer, hail!
Hear, Romans, hear! did not the Sibyl tell you,
A fool should set Rome free? I am that fool.
Brutus bids Rome be free!

All.

What can this mean?

Bru.

It means that Lucius Junius has thrown off
The mask of madness, and his soul rides forth

On the destroying whirlwind, to avenge
The wrongs of that bright excellence, and Rome.

Lucretius.

Can this be Lucius Junius?

Val.

Ha! the voice
Of inspiration speaks.

Col.

O glorious Brutus,
Let me in tears adore the bounteous gods
Who have restored thee to redress my woes;
And, in my woes, my country.

Bru.

No more of this.
Stand not in wonder. Every instant now
Is precious to your cause. Rise! Snatch your arms!
[*Kneels.*
Hear me, great Jove! and thou, paternal Mars,
And spotless Vesta! To the death, I swear
My burning vengeance shall pursue these Tarquins.
Ne'er shall my limbs know rest till they are swept
From off the earth, which groans beneath their infamy.
This, from the bottom of my soul, I swear! [*Rises.*
Valerius, Collatine, Lucretius, all,
Here I adjure ye by this fatal dagger,
All stained and reeking with her sacred blood,
Be partners in my oath, revenge her fall!

All.

We swear! [*Placing their hands on dagger.*

Bru.

Well have ye said: and, O, methinks I see
The hovering spirit of the murdered matron
Look down and bow her airy head to bless you.
Summon your slaves, and bear the body hence,

High in the view, through all the streets of Rome,
Up to the Forum. On! The least delay
May draw down ruin, and defeat our glory.
On, Romans, on! The fool shall set you free!
[*Exeunt, severally, all but Collatinus.—Scene changes.*

Scene Second. { ROME. APARTMENT IN THE PALACE OF TULLIA.

[*Enter Corunna, meeting Horatius.*

Cor.

My lord, my lord! Quick, tell me where is Tullia?

Horatius.

Whence this alarm? what wouldst thou?

Cor.

Rebellion rages ——

Horatius.

Rebellion?

Cor.

Lucretia,
The wife of Collatinus, is no more.
The furious multitude have borne her body
With shouts of vengeance through the streets of Rome,
And "Sextus Tarquin," is the general cry.

Horatius.

Where are thy troops? why dost thou dally here,
When thou shouldst pay their insolence with death?

Cor.

The soldiers join the throng, the gates are closed,
And the mad crowd exclaim, "We banish Tarquin."
Brutus is at their head, and leads them on.

Horatius.

What miracle is this? How say'st thou, Brutus?

Cor.

Ay, the fool Brutus. Now before the rostrum
The body of Lucretia is exposed,
And Brutus there harangues assembled Rome.
He waves aloft
The bloody dagger; all the people hear him
With wildest admiration and applause:
He speaks as if he held the souls of men
In his own hand, and moulded them at pleasure.
They look on him as they would view a god,
Who, from a darkness which invested him,
Springs forth, and, knitting his stern brow in frowns,
Proclaims the vengeful will of angry Jove.

Horatius.

Fly through the city; gather all the force
You can assemble, and straight hasten hither:
I 'll to the queen. Lose not a moment! Hence!
I tremble for Rome's safety! Haste!—begone!

[*Exeunt.— Scene changes.*

Scene Third.

THE FORUM. — BRUTUS UPON THE FORUM. — THE DEAD BODY OF LUCRETIA BEFORE HIM. COLLATINUS, LUCRETIUS, VALERIUS AND OTHERS DISCOVERED. THE POPULACE FILL THE STAGE.

Bru.

Thus, thus, my friends, fast as our breaking hearts
Permitted utterance, we have told our story;
And now, to say one word of the imposture,
The mask necessity has made me wear.

When the ferocious malice of your king,—
King, do I call him?—when the monster, Tarquin,
Slew, as the most of you may well remember,
My father, Marcus, and my elder brother,—
Envying at once their virtues and their wealth,—
How could I hope a shelter from his power,
But in the false face I have worn so long? [*All shout.*

First Rom.

Most wonderful!

Second Rom.

Silence! he speaks again.

Bru.

Would you know why I summoned you together?
Ask ye what brings me here? Behold this dagger,
Clotted with gore! Behold that frozen corse!
See where the lost Lucretia sleeps in death!
She was the mark and model of the time,
The mould in which each female face was formed,
The very shrine and sacristy of virtue;
Fairer than ever was a form created
By youthful fancy when the blood strays wild,
And never-resting thought is all on fire,
The worthiest of the worthy. Not the nymph
Who met old Numa in his hallowed walks,
And whispered in his ear her strains divine,
Can I conceive beyond her. Such perfections
Might have called back the torpid breast of age
To long-forgotten rapture; such a mind
Might have abashed the boldest libertine
And turned desire to reverential love
And holiest affection. O, my countrymen,
You all can witness when that she went forth,—
It was a holiday in Rome; old age
Forgot its crutch, labour its task; all ran;
And mothers, turning to their daughters, cried,
"There, there 's Lucretia." Now, look ye, where she lies.
That beauteous flower, that innocent sweet rose,
Torn up by ruthless violence—gone, gone, gone!

All.

Sextus shall die!

Bru.

But then, the king, his father ——

First Rom.

What shall be done with him?

Second Rom.

Speak, Brutus!

All.

Tell us, tell us!

Bru.

Say, would you seek instruction? would ye ask
What ye should do? Ask ye yon conscious walls,
Which saw his poisoned brother, saw the incest
Committed there, and they will cry, Revenge!
Ask yon deserted street, where Tullia drove
O'er her dead father's corse; 't will cry, Revenge!
Ask yonder senate-house, whose stones are purple
With human blood, and it will cry, Revenge!
Go to the tomb where lies his murdered wife,
And the poor queen, who loved him as her son;
Their unappeasèd ghosts will shriek, Revenge!
The temples of the gods, the all-viewing heavens,
The gods themselves, shall justify the cry,
And swell the general sound,—Revenge, Revenge!

All.

Revenge! Revenge!

Bru.

And we will be revenged, my countrymen!
Brutus shall lead you on; Brutus, a name
Which will, when you 're revenged, be dearer to him
Than all the noblest titles earth can boast.

First Rom.

Live, Brutus!

Second Rom.

Valiant Brutus!

Third Rom.

Down with Tarquin!

Second Rom.

We 'll have no Tarquins!

First Rom.

We will have a Brutus!

Third Rom.

Let 's to the Capitol, and shout for Brutus!

All speak together.

All. [*Shouting.*

Brutus shall be king!

Bru. [*Descends.*

I your king?
Brutus your king? No, fellow-citizens;
If mad ambition in this guilty frame
Had strung one kingly fibre,—yea, but one,—
By all the gods, this dagger which I hold
Should rip it out, though it entwined my heart.

Val.

Then I am with thee, noble, noble Brutus.
Brutus, the new restored, Brutus, by Sibyl,
By Pythian prophetess, foretold, shall lead us!

Bru.

Now take the body up; bear it before us
To Tarquin's palace; there we 'll light our torches,
And in the blazing conflagration, rear
A pile for these chaste relics, that shall send
Her soul amongst the stars. On! Brutus leads you!
[*The people rush out, shouting.*

QUICK CURTAIN.

Act Fourth.

Scene First. { ROME. TARQUIN'S PALACE. A COURT. AT BACK A GRAND ENTRANCE, WITH FOLDING GATES.

[*Enter Tullia.*

Tul.

Gods! whither shall a frantic mother fly?
Accursed siege of Ardea! Tarquin, Tarquin,
Where art thou! Save thy wife, thy son, thy city!

[*Enter Titus* R.

Tit.

Where is the prince,—where 's Sextus?

Tul.

Where? O heavens!
His madness hath undone us! Where is Sextus?
Perhaps ev'n now the barbarous ruffians hurl him
Alive into the flames, or, piecemeal, drag
Along the rebel streets his mangled trunk ——

Tit.

No more! I 'll save him, or avenge! [*Going* L.

[*Enter Horatius* L, *who meets Titus, and stops him.*

Horatius.

Turn, noble Roman, turn;
Set not your life upon a desperate stake. [*Shouts within.*
Hark! they are at the gates!

Tul.

Does my son live?

Horatius.

Furious he sprang upon the rebel throng,
And hewed his desperate passage. But the time
Admits no further question.—Save yourself!

Tul.

Who leads them on?

Horatius.

Your new-named fool, your Brutus.

Tit.

Death! my father?

Tul.

Brutus in arms!
O, Sibyl! O, my fate! Farewell to greatness!
I 've heard my doom.

Tit.

Earth, earth, enclose me! [*Continued shouts within.*

Tul.

Hark! it bursts upon us!

Horatius.

Ha! nearer yet. Now be propitious, Mars!
Now nerve my arm with more than mortal fury,
Till the dissembler sink beneath its vengeance.
[*Exit* L. U. E.

Tul.

Fly, save my child! save my—save your Tarquinia!

Tit.

Or die defending. [*Exit* L. U. E.

[*The tumult becomes very violent, and battering at the gate and wall begins.*

Tul.

Ah! if amidst my legions I might fall,
Death were not then inglorious; but to perish

By the vile scum of Rome—hunted by dogs—
Baited to death by brawling, base mechanics—
Shame insupportable! [*Loud clamour.*

[*The gate and wall are shattered, and they fall, inward, in a broken mass. The palaces behind are seen in flames.—Enter Soldiers and Citizens, rushing over the ruins; Brutus appears amongst them, and advances to the front.*

Bru.

Seize the parricide! [*They surround Tullia.*

Tul.

Avaunt! I am your queen!

Bru.

Tarquins, we cast you from us.

Tul.

Give me a sword, and let me fall like Tullia.

Bru.

No, we reserve our swords for nobler uses
Than to make war with women; to the Tarquins,
To your adulterous sons, we leave that shame.

Tul.

If then 't will better sate thy cruelty,
Precipitate me quick into those flames,
And with the wreck of empire mix my ashes.

Bru.

Take her to Rhea's temple; take her hence,
And lodge her with her ancestors!

Tul.

Ye gods!
My father's sepulchre! I 'll not approach it!

Bru.

'T will furnish wholesome recollection. Hence!

Tul.

Not to that fatal place! Send me not thither!

Bru.

'T is fixed.

Tul.

Choose the most loathsome dungeon — there confine me,
Or give me death instead. My heart recoils
Against that temple.

Bru.

There, and only there,
By your dead father's tomb, you must abide
The judgment of the State.

Tul.

Then, by the gods,
Whom, for the last time, I invoke,
If no means else
Of ready death present themselves,
No particle of food shall pass these lips,
Till, in the void of nature, hungry madness,
With blank oblivion entering, shall confound
And cancel all perception.

[*Exit* R. *Tullia, guarded. Brutus is following.*
Enter Titus L. U. E.

Tit.

Turn, O my father,
And look upon thy son!

Bru.

What wouldst thou? speak.

Tit.

If thou hast reason, O, have mercy also;
But if in madness thou hast done this deed ——

Bru.

I am not mad, but as the lion is,
When he breaks down the toils that tyrant craft
Hath spread to catch him. Think not we will suffer
These monsters to profane the air of heaven.
Shall Titus, then, oppose our great design?
Shall Brutus meet a recreant in his son?
Banish this folly! Have a care! I know thee:
There is a lurking passion at thy heart,
Which leaves but half a soul for Rome and me.

Tit.

You wrong me. Like a Roman I exult
To see Lucretia's murder thus avenged,
And like a son glory in such a father!
Yet hear me through; nay, do not frown, but hear me.

Bru.

Go on; confess thy weakness, and dismiss it.

Tit.

'T was in the sleep of my dear father's reason,
When Tarquin's freedman, in a saucy mood,
Vented vile jests at thy unhappy weakness,
Stung to the quick, I snatched a weapon up,
And felled him to my foot.

Bru.

Why, 't was well done.
The knave was saucy, and you slew him. On!

Tit.

'T was on this very spot Tarquinia stood,
And when the wrathful father had denounced
Immediate death on this my filial act,
She with the tongue of interceding pity,
And tears that streamed in concert with her suit,
Implored, prevailed, and gave me life—and love.

Bru.

'T is well. Behold, I give her life for life:
Rome may be free, although Tarquinia lives.
This I concede; but more if thou attemptest,—
By all the gods! — nay, if thou dost not take
Her image, though with smiling Cupids decked,
And pluck it from thy heart, there to receive
Rome and her glories in without a rival,—
Thou art no son of mine! thou art no Roman!

[*Exit Brutus* R., *followed by soldiers and citizens.*
Enter Tarquinia L. U. E.

Tar.

Save, save me, Titus! O, amid the crash
Of falling palaces, preserve Tarquinia!
Or, do I meet in thee a double rebel,
Traitor alike to me and to thy king?
Speak, I conjure thee! Will the son of Brutus
Now take me to his pity and protection,
Or stab with perfidy the heart that loves him?

Tit.

Cruel suspicion! O, adored Tarquinia,
I live but to preserve you! You are free:
I have my father's sanction for your safety!

Tar.

I scorn a life that is preserved by Brutus!
I scorn to outlive parents, brothers, friends!
I 'll die with those
Whom this dire night hath murdered!

Tit.

Who are murdered?
Whom hath the sword of Brutus slain? Not one
Of all thy kindred ——

Tar.

Say'st thou? Lives my mother?

Tit.

She lives, and Sextus, even he escapes
The storm which he has raised, and flies to Ardea.

Tar.

Speed him, ye gods, with eagle swiftness thither!
And may those thunders which now shake the walls
Of tottering Ardea, like a whirlwind burst
On this devoted city, 'whelm its towers,
And crush the traitorous hive beneath their ruins.
Now, Titus, where is now thy promised faith?
Didst thou not swear no dangers should divide us?

Tit.

I did; and, constant to my oath, behold me
Thy faithful guardian in this night of terrors.

Tar.

Be still my guardian; snatch me from these terrors,
Bear me to Ardea, be the friend of nature,
And give the rescued daughter to the arms
Of her protecting parent; thus you gain
The praise of men, the blessings of the gods,
And all that honour, all that love can grant.

Tit.

Despair! Distraction! Whither shall I turn me?

Tar.

Why do you waver? Cast away this weakness;
Be glorious in your cruelty, and leave me.
By all the demons who prepare the heart
To rush upon the self-destroying steel,
The same dire moment which gives thee to Brutus,
Gives me to death.

Tit.

Horror! Tarquinia, hold!

Tar.

Lo! I am armed. Farewell! How I have loved you,
My death shall witness; how you have deceived me,
Let your own conscience tell. Now to your father!
Now go and mingle with the murderers;
Go, teach those fiends what perjury can do,
And show your hands bathed in Tarquinia's blood:
The filial deed shall welcome you to Brutus,
And fill his gloomy soul with savage joy.

Tit.

Take, take me hence forever! Let me lose,
In these dear arms, the very name of son,
All claims of nature, every sense but love!

Tar.

The gods that guard the majesty of Rome,
And that sweet power, whose influence turns thy heart
To pity and compliance, shall reward
And bless thee for the deed.

Tit.

Can he be blest
On whom a father's direful curse shall fall?

Tar.

A madman's imprecation is no curse.

Tit.

O, while thy love upholds me, I can stand
Against the world's contempt; remember, only,
For whose dear sake I am undone; remember,
My heart was honour's once ——

Tar.

And shall be ever!
Come, I will show thee where bright honour grows,
Where thou shalt pluck it from the topmost branch,
And wear it in its freshest, fairest bloom.

[*Exeunt* L. U. E.

[*Scene Second is sometimes omitted.*]

Scene Second. THE TEMPLE OF RHEA. A LARGE DOOR, LEADING TO THE TOMB OF SERVIUS TULLIUS, FORMER KING OF ROME, THE FATHER OF TULLIA, VISIBLE, C.

[*Enter the Priestess of Rhea, meeting the Vestal Virgins of the Temple.*

Pr.

Daughters of Rhea, since the lords of Rome
Have to your holy hands consigned the charge
Of their now captive queen, inform the Priestess
How your sad prisoner abides her durance.
Is her proud soul yet humbled, or, indignant,
Doth it still breathe defiance and contempt?

Ves. Vir.

Sullen and silent, she resolves on death:
She will not taste of nourishment. She comes.

[*Enter Tullia.*

Pr.

I pray you, royal lady, be entreated ——

Tul.

I tell you, no!

Pr.

Think what a train of weary hours have passed
Since you had taste of food.

Tul.

'T is well!
The fewer are to come.

Pr.

How can you live to meet your royal husband,
To fold your children in your arms again,
If you resist support?

Tul.

Ha! well remembered!
What news from Ardea? Will he march for Rome?
Hark! Do you hear his trumpet? Is he coming?
Ay, this is hope, and worth the feeding.
'T is well, 't is well!
But, tell me, doth the king know of this kindness?

Pr.

What king?

Tul.

What king?
Brutus, the king of Rome. Knows he of this?

Pr.

He does.

Tul.

And would he I should live?

Pr.

He would.

Tul.

Merciful villain!
Yes, he would have me live to grace his triumphs.
I know the utmost of his mercy.
Subtle traitor!
I 'll not taste food, though immortality
Were grafted to each atom. — Hark! What 's that?
Heard you that groan?

Pr.

It is your fancy's coinage.

Tul.

Again! 'T is deep and hollow:
It issues from the vault! Set the door open!
Open, I say!

Pr.

It is your father's sepulchre.

Tul.

My father! righteous gods! I killed my father!
Horrible retribution!

Pr.

Wretched daughter,
If thou hast done this deed, prepare thy spirit,
By wholesome meditation, for atonement,
And let no passion interrupt the task
Of penitence and prayer.

Tul.

I 'll pray no more.
There is no mercy in the skies for murder;
Therefore no praying, none.
I have a plea for my impenitence—
Madness.
These groans have made me mad; all the night through
They howled distraction to my sleepless brain.
You 've shut me up with furies to torment me,
And starved me into madness. Hark! again!
Unbar the door! Unbar it! By the gods,
The voice is more than human which I hear!
I 'll enter there, I will be satisfied,
Although the confirmation should present
His awful form.

[*She rushes forward. The Priestess and Vestals, in alarm, interpose, but cannot withstand her. She dashes against the tomb. The bars within, fall, with a crash; the doors fly open, and reveal a monumental figure of Servius Tullius. Tullia recoils, shricks, falls, and expires.*

CURTAIN.

Act Fifth.

Scene First. { ROME. BEFORE THE TEMPLE OF MARS. BRUTUS AND COLLATINUS, AS CONSULS, WITH LICTORS, VALERIUS, LUCRETIUS, AND NUMEROUS FOLLOWERS, DISCOVERED.

Bru.

You judge me rightly, friends. The purpled robe,
The curule chair, the lictors' keen-edged axe,
Rejoice not Brutus; 't is his country's freedom.
When once that freedom shall be firmly rooted,
Then, with redoubled pleasure, will your consul
Exchange the splendid miseries of power
For the calm comforts of a happy home.

[*Enter a Messenger* L. 1. E.

Mess.

All health to Rome, her senate, and her consuls.

Bru.

Speak on! What message hast thou to impart?

Mess.

I bring intelligence of Sextus Tarquin,
Who, on arriving at a neighbouring village,
Was known, and by the people stoned to death.

[*Messenger goes up stage.*

Bru.

Now, Lucretia,
Thy ghost may cease to wander o'er the earth,
And rest in peace!

Lucretius.

Heaven's ways are just!

Col.

Yet I regret the villain should be slain
By any hand but mine.

[*Enter a Centurion* R. U. E.

Cent.

Health to Brutus!
Shame and confusion to the foes of Rome!

Bru.

Now, without preface, soldier, to your business.

Cent.

As I kept watch at the Quirinal gate,
Ere break of day, an armèd company
Burst, on a sudden, through the barrier gùard,
Pushing their course for Ardea. Straight alarmed,
I wheeled my cohort round, and charged 'em home.
Sharp was the conflict for awhile, and doubtful,
Till on the seizure of Tarquinia's person,
A young patrician ——

Bru.

Ha! patrician?

Cent.

Such
His dress bespoke him, though to me unknown.

Bru.

Proceed! What more?

Cent.

The lady being taken,
This youth, the life and leader of the band,
His sword high waving in the act to strike,
Dropt his uplifted weapon, and at once
Yielded himself my prisoner.—O, Valerius,
What have I said, that thus the consul changes?

Bru.

Why do you pause? Go on.

Cent.

Their leader seized,
The rest surrendered. Him, a settled gloom
Possesses wholly, nor, as I believe,
Hath a word passed his lips, to all my questions
Still obstinately shut.

Bru.

Bring him before us.

[*Exit Centurion* R. U. E.

Val.

O, my brave friend, horror invades my heart.

Bru.

Silence, be calm.

Val.

I know thy soul
A compound of all excellence, and pray
The mighty gods to put thee to no trial
Beyond a mortal bearing.

Bru.

No, they will not —
Nay, be secure,— they cannot. Prithee, friend,
Look out, and if the worst that can befall me
Be verified, turn back and give some sign
What thou hast seen: thou canst excuse this weakness,
Being thyself a father. [*Valerius gives a sign.*
Ha! Enough:
I understand thee. Since it must be so,
Do your great pleasure, gods! Now, now it comes!

[*Titus and Tarquinia are brought in, guarded,* R. U. E. *Titus advances. Tarquinia remains behind.*

Tit.

My father! Give me present death, ye powers!

Cent.

What have I done? Art thou the son of Brutus?

Tit.

No, Brutus scorns to father such a son!
O, venerable judge, wilt thou not speak? [*Titus kneels.*
Turn not away; hither direct thine eyes,
And look upon this sorrow-stricken form;
Then to thine own great heart remit my plea,
And doom as nature dictates.

Val.

Peace, you 'll anger him!
Be silent and await! O, suffering mercy,
Plead in a father's heart, and speak for nature!

[*Brutus turns away from his son, and waves his hand to the Centurion to remove him to a little distance. Titus rises and retires.*

Bru.

Come hither, Collatinus. [*Collatinus advances* L.
The deep wound
You suffered in the loss of your Lucretia
Demanded more than fortitude to bear:
I saw your agony, I felt your woe.

Col.

You more than felt it, you revenged it, too.

Bru.

But, ah! my brother consul, your Lucretia
Fell nobly, as a Roman spirit should;
She fell, a model of transcendent virtue.

Col.

My mind misgives. What dost thou aim at, Brutus?

Bru.

That youth — my Titus — was my age's hope;
I loved him more than language can express;
I thought him born to dignify the world.

Col.

My heart bleeds for you! He may yet be saved ——

Bru.

Consul—for Rome I live, not for myself:
I dare not trust my firmness in this crisis,
Warring 'gainst every thing my soul holds dear.
Therefore return without me to the senate;
Haply my presence might restrain their justice.
Look that these traitors meet their trial straight,
And then despatch a messenger to tell me
How the wise fathers have disposed of——Go!

[*Collatinus goes out* R., *attended, and as Brutus is departing* L., *Tarquinia rushes forward.*

Tar.

Stop,—turn and hear the daughter of your king!
I speak for justice,—mercy, thou hast none,—
For him, your son.
By gratitude and love I drew him off.
I saved his life,—
Who shall condemn him for protecting mine?

Bru.

We try the crime; the motive heaven will judge.
My honour he hath stabbed,—I pardon that.
He hath done more,—he hath betrayed his country.
That is a crime which every honest heart
That beats for freedom, every Roman feels,
And the full stream of justice must have way.

Tar.

Because thy soul was never swayed by love,
Canst thou not credit what his bosom felt?

Bru.

I can believe that beauty such as thine
May urge a thousand fascinating snares
To lure the wavering and confound the weak;

But what is honour, which a sigh can shake?
What is his virtue, whom a tear can melt?
Truth, valour, justice, constancy of soul,—
These are the attributes of manly natures.
Be woman ne'er so beauteous, man was made
For nobler uses than to be her slave.

Tar.

Hard, unrelenting man! Are these the fruits
Of filial piety, and hath thy son
Wearied the gods with prayers till they restored
A mind, and gave thee reason? Would to heaven
They 'd given thee mercy, too! 't would more become thee
Than these new ensigns, Brutus; more than all
Thy lictors, haughty consul, or thy robes
Dipped in the blood — O horror! — of a son.

Bru.

No more! By all the gods, I 'll hear no more!
[*Brutus goes* L.

Tit.

A word, for pity's sake. [*Titus kneels.*
Before thy feet,
Humbled in soul, thy son and prisoner kneels.
Love is my plea, a father is my judge,
Nature my advocate; I can no more.
If these will not appease a parent's heart,
Strike through them all, and lodge thy vengeance here!

Bru.

Break off! I will not, cannot hear thee further!
The affliction nature hath imposed on Brutus,
Brutus will suffer as he may. Enough
That we enlarge Tarquinia. Go, be free!
[*Titus rises. Tarquinia goes to him.*
Centurion, [*Centurion advances.*
Give her conduct out of Rome.
Lictors, attend: secure your prisoner.
[*Lictors advance one step.*

Point your axes!

[*Lictors turn the edges of their axes towards Titus.*

To the Senate! [*Lictors face to* R.

On! [*Exit Brutus* L. *Picture. Scene closes in.*

Scene Second.—A Room in the House of Brutus.

[*Enter Brutus.*

Bru.

Like a lost, guilty wretch, I look around
And start at every footstep, lest it bring
The fatal news of my poor son's conviction.
O, Rome, thou little know'st——no more—it comes.

[*Enter Valerius* L. 1. E.

Val.

My friend, the senate have to thee transferred
The right of judgment on thy son's offence.

Bru.

To me!

Val.

To thee alone.

Bru.

What of the rest?

Val.

Their sentence is already passed.
E'en now, perhaps, the lictor's dreaded hand
Cuts off their forfeit lives.

Bru.

Say'st thou the senate have to me referred
The fate of Titus?

Val.

Such is their sovereign will.
They think you merit this distinguished honour:
A father's grief deserves to be revered.
Rome will approve whatever you decree.

Bru.

And is his guilt established beyond doubt?

Val.

Too clearly.

Bru.

O, ye gods! ye gods! Valerius!

Val.

What wouldst thou, noble Roman?

Bru.

'T is said thou hast pulled down thy house, Valerius,
The stately pile that with such cost was reared.

Val.

I have; but what doth Brutus thence infer?

Bru.

It was a goodly structure: I remember
How fondly you surveyed its rising grandeur;
With what a fatherly delight you summoned
Each grace and ornament that might enrich
The child of your creation, till it swelled
To an imperial size, and overpeered
The petty citizens, that humbly dwelt
Under its lofty walls, in huts and hovels,
Like emmets at the foot of towering Ætna!
Then, noble Roman, then with patriot zeal,
Dear as it was, and valued, you condemned
And levelled the proud pile; and, in return,

Were by your grateful countrymen surnamed,
And shall to all posterity descend,—
Poplicola.

Val.

Yes, Brutus, I conceive
The awful aim and drift of thy discourse;
But I conjure thee, pause! Thou art a father.

Bru.

I am a Roman consul! What, my friend,
Shall no one but Valerius love his country
Dearer than house, or property, or children?
Now, follow me, and in the face of heaven,
I 'll mount the judgment seat; there, see if Brutus
Feel not for Rome as warmly as Poplicola.

[*Exeunt* L.

Scene Third. { BEFORE THE TEMPLE OF MARS. A TRIBUNAL, WITH A CONSULAR CHAIR UPON IT. COLLATINUS, LUCRETIUS, SENATORS, AND CITIZENS DISCOVERED.

[*Enter Brutus, followed by Valerius.—Brutus ascends the Tribunal.*

Bru.

Romans, the blood which hath been shed this day
Hath been shed wisely. Traitors, who conspire
Against mature societies may urge
Their acts as bold and daring; and though villains,
Yet they are manly villains; but to stab
The cradled innocent, as these have done,
To strike their country in the mother-pangs
Of struggling childbirth, and direct the dagger
To freedom's infant throat, is a deed so black,
That my foiled tongue refuses it a name. [*A pause.*

There is one criminal still left for judgment;
Let him approach.

[*Titus is brought in by the Lictors* R. 1. E.

Prisoner——
Romans, forgive this agony of grief,
My heart is bursting, nature must have way:
I will perform all that a Roman should,
I cannot feel less than a father ought.

[*He gives a signal to the Lictors to fall back, and then advances from the judgment-seat to Titus.*

Well, Titus, speak, how is it with thee now?
Tell me, my son, art thou prepared to die?

Tit.

Father, I call the powers of heaven to witness
Titus dares die, if so you have decreed.
The gods will have it so.

Bru.

They will, my Titus;
Nor heaven nor earth can have it otherwise.
It seems as if thy fate were preördained
To fix the reeling spirits of the people,
And settle the loose liberty of Rome.
'T is fixed. O, therefore, let not fancy cheat thee:
So fixed thy death, that 't is not in the power
Of mortal man to save thee from the axe.

Tit.

The axe! O, heaven, then must I fall so basely?
What, shall I perish like a common felon?

Bru.

How else do traitors suffer? Nay, Titus, more,
I must myself ascend yon sad tribunal,
And there behold thee meet this shame of death,—
With all thy hopes, and all thy youth upon thee;
See thy head taken by the common axe,
All,— if the gods can hold me to my purpose,—
Without one groan, without one pitying tear.

Tit.

Die like a felon—ha, a common felon!
But I deserve it all. Yet here I fail;
This ignominy quite unmans me.
O, Brutus, Brutus! Must I call you father, [*Kneels.*
Yet have no token of your tenderness,
No sign of mercy,—not even leave to fall
As noble Romans fall, by my own sword?
Father, why should you make my heart suspect
That all your late compassion was dissembled?
How can I think that you did ever love me?

Bru.

Think that I love thee by my present passion,
By these unmanly tears, these earthquakes here,
These sighs that strain the very strings of life;
Let these convince you that no other cause
Could force a father thus to wrong his nature.
[*Goes up stage.*

Tit.

O, hold, thou violated majesty! [*Rises.*
I now submit with calmness to my fate.
Come forth, ye executioners of justice,
Come, take my life, and give it to my country!

Bru.

Embrace thy wretched father. May the gods
Arm thee with patience in this awful hour!
The sovereign magistrate of injured Rome
Condemns
A crime, thy father's bleeding heart forgives.
The violated genius of thy country
Rears his sad head and passes sentence on thee.
Go, meet thy death with a more manly courage
Than grief now suffers me to show in parting;
And, while she punishes, let Rome admire thee!
Farewell! Eternally farewell!

Tit.

O, Brutus! O, my father!

Bru.

What wouldst thou say, my son?

Tit.

Wilt thou forgive me?
When I shall be no more, forget not my Tarquinia.

Bru.

Leave her to my care.

Tit.

Farewell, forever! [*Kneeling, slowly.*

Bru.

Forever! [*Re-ascends the Tribunal, assisted by Collatinus and Valerius.*
Lictors, attend! Conduct your prisoner forth!

All.

Whither?

Bru.

To death! [*Titus rises.*] When you do reach the spot,
My hand shall wave your signal for the axe;
Then, let the trumpet's sound proclaim it done!
[*Brutus sits.*

[*Titus is led out by the Lictors. A dead march, which gradually dies away. Brutus remains, seated, on the Tribunal.*

Poor youth! Thy pilgrimage is at an end!
A few sad steps have brought thee to the brink
Of that tremendous precipice whose depth
No thought of man can fathom. [*Dead march ceases.*
Justice now
Demands her victim! A little moment,
And I am childless. One effort, and 't is past!—

[*He rises and waves his hand; three sounds of the trumpet are heard.*

Justice is satisfied, and Rome is free!

[*Brutus falls. The characters group around him.*

CURTAIN.

BRUTUS.

APPENDIX.

I.—Sketch of the Author of Brutus.

JOHN HOWARD PAYNE was born on June 9, 1791, in a house which formerly stood near the corner of Pearl and Broad streets, New-York. Of his ancestry but little is known. His maternal grandfather was a Hebrew, and, according to the legend on his tombstone,—at East Hampton, Long Island,—"an Israelite, indeed, in whom there was no guile." This accident of Hebrew lineage he shares with some of the most distinguished players that have appeared. His childhood was passed at East Hampton, Long Island, but at an early age he was taken to live in Boston. While still a boy his spirit was fired with emulation by the success, in England, of "The Young Roscius," Master Betty. Not being permitted to act, however, he became a writer upon acting, and discussed his favourite topic in the newspapers. At this time he became acquainted with Samuel Woodworth, author of the "Old Oaken Bucket," who was then an apprentice in a printing office, and who chanced to be publishing, for amusement, a child's paper, called "The Fly." In this young Payne assisted; till, after a while, he was sent to New-York and put into a counting-house, with the special understanding that his employers should, in their care of him, repress, and, if possible, destroy his taste for the theatre. Under these restraints he clandestinely edited and published [1806] a theatrical sheet, called "The Thespian Mirror,"—which was thought to display remarkable strength and maturity of intellect. Attracted by the promise of the youthful editor, a practical friend, Mr. John E. Seaman, offered to pay the expenses of his education at a University. This offer was accepted, and Payne left the counting-house forever.

It would not seem that his withdrawal from trade was a serious detriment to the mercantile interest, nor that he suffered poignant regret at the change of occupation. Fears were entertained, though, that he

would be spoiled; and much gratuitous advice — the cheap benevolence of commonplace persons — was poured upon him from various sources. He had but few friends, it appears, who were men of the world. One of these — Charles Brockden Brown, the novelist — addressed him the following wise and gracious words: "Were it possible for a miracle to be wrought in your favour, and that the experience of a dozen years could be obtained without living so long, there would be little danger that a heart so unperverted as yours would mislead you. The experience of others will avail you nothing. They may talk, indeed; but, until you are as old as the counsellor, and have seen with your own eyes as much as he has, his words are mere idle sounds, impertinent and unintelligible. Fancy and habit are supreme over your conduct, and all your friends have to trust to is a heart naturally pure and tractable, and a taste, if I may so call it, for the approbation of the wise and good." In pursuance of his benefactor's plan Payne was sent to school at Schenectady, N. Y. He made a trip to Albany in company with Mr. Brown. A journal which he kept, of this trip, and which would have furnished an interesting study of his character, has been lost.

Payne did not remain long at college, nor was his experience there a pleasant one. His friends, who were determined to overcome his inclination for the stage, established over him a system of injudicious espial. His allowance of money was limited, and his instructors were admonished to "draw a tight rein" in the management of their pupil. Two events soon occurred, which, sad as they were, so beneficially affected his fortunes as to turn into its natural channel the current of a life which otherwise might have been passed in uncongenial pursuits. His mother died, and his father became bankrupt.

In this emergency Payne determined to fulfil his long cherished ambition and become an actor. "A slow, reluctant and weeping leave" was granted by his friends, and on February 24, 1809, being then seventeen, he made his first appearance on the stage — at the old Park Theatre, New-York, in the character of *Young Norval*. "His face," says Dunlap, "was remarkably handsome, his countenance full of intelligence, and his manner fascinating." On April 3d, the same year, he played, as *Young Norval*, in Boston, and was welcomed with enthusiasm. On the 17th of May he began a second engagement in New-York, and played in succession *Young Norval*, *Hastings*, *Octavian*, *Frederick Fitzroy*, *Rolla*, *Edgar*, and *Hamlet*. "Hamlet" was produced for his benefit. The engagement lasted six nights; the average receipts were $500 a night; his benefit cleared $755. He then went to Philadelphia and Baltimore, in both of which places he found the theatres

closed against him. This reverse of fortune was attributed to the influence of Stephen Price, the manager of the Park Theatre, with whom he had quarrelled. His cause, however, was espoused by good friends, and his reception by the warm-hearted citizens of Baltimore proved entirely cordial. In a fortnight he had earned $1,500.

He also played successful engagements at Richmond, Charleston and Washington. It is said that Henry Placide first attracted attention by the imitations he, at this period, gave of the acting of Payne. From Baltimore Payne returned to New-York, where he made the acquaintance of George Frederick Cooke. "I thought him a polite, sensible youth," says Cooke, "and the reverse of *our* young Roscius." On the 18th of March, 1811, Cooke played *Lear*, and Payne *Edgar*, at the Park Theatre, with much success. Payne then revisited Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, and played successful engagements in each city. His early theatrical career in America was as short as it was brilliant. As a young actor he won the applause of the people, the approbation of competent judges, and a distinguished rank in his profession; and, when he departed, to pursue his fortunes in the old world, it was with bright prospect of increasing excellence and fair renown. On January 17th, 1813, he embarked at Baltimore, in the ship "Catherine Ray," and sailed for Liverpool. It was war time when he arrived in England, and the policy with which American travellers should be treated had not yet been determined by the Government. So the party of which he was a member was imprisoned for two nights. After his release he wrote to Whitebread, and procured an engagement at Drury Lane, where, on June 4, 1813, he acted, in "Douglas." Mrs. Powell, from Covent Garden, supported him in the part of *Lady Randolph*. To this lady he wrote, next day, a letter of thanks. She answered: "If you saw any merit in my playing *Lady Randolph*, it was entirely owing to a son I felt proud of." On a later occasion he again played in "Douglas," winning from one of the journals of London the following well-tempered approval: "A little study under judicious instruction will soon correct the trifling deficiencies which are discernible in his enunciation, while, by the aid of a fencing and dancing master, he may acquire more graceful attitudes than he now exhibits. In all other respects nature has endowed him with every quality for a great actor. He possesses all the simplicity which is the result of a fine taste, and he appears to have a chasteness of feeling and a judiciousness of conception which never suffer him to run into those vicious extravagances so common in blustering, half-formed actors. He speaks at once to the sober senses, to the feelings, and to the heart. In passages where no vehemence of feeling is required he

is calm, temperate and interesting. He never rants unnecessarily. His own discretion is his tutor. Such is the character of this young gentleman, who makes a fairer promise than any juvenile adventurer we have ever seen."

His next appearance was in "Romeo." J. W. Wallack, the founder of Wallack's Theatre, played the *Prince* on this night, and his brother, Henry Wallack, appeared as *Abram*. A false report was at this time circulated, that Payne was an illegitimate son of Thomas Payne, author of "Common Sense," and the "Age of Reason." On the 15th of July, 1813, at Liverpool, he played *Hamlet*, and on a subsequent evening he had a brilliant benefit there. From Liverpool he went to Ireland, where he played successful engagements at Dublin and Cork. The famous Miss O'Neill supported him in both, and when, at Cork, he played for his benefit as *Norval* and as *Petruchio*, that brilliant actress appeared as *Lady Randolph* and *Katherine*, and divided with him the laurels of victorious effort. While in Ireland he made the acquaintance of Daniel O'Connell and Charles Phillips, by both of whom he was esteemed. In a speech at a dinner given in honour of Payne, on Innisfallen Island, Phillips remarked that, "to be associated with Mr. Payne must be, to any one who regards private virtues and personal accomplishments, a source of peculiar pride." On leaving Ireland Payne went to Paris, where he gained the good-will of Talma, and also fraternized with Lord Byron's friend, Sir John Cam Hobhouse, who happened to be there. He had by this time satiated his fancy for acting, and he appears to have determined to devote himself exclusively to dramatic authorship. He first adapted a French piece and called it "The Maid and the Magpie." This was sold to Harris, of Covent Garden, for £150. He then agreed with Douglass Kinnaird, manager of Drury Lane, to reside in Paris and to furnish, for that Theatre, versions of French novelties, as they should occur. Here began his career as a dramatist. It is recorded by Dunlap, in his "History of the American Theatre," that at the outset Payne declined a permanent situation in the stock company of Drury Lane. "The charms of starring were preferred," says that historian, "and, finally, literary pursuits, particularly those connected with the drama, withdrew him altogether from the profession of an actor."

Payne's engagement with Drury Lane did not last long. He then made a contract, both literary and theatrical, with Covent Garden. The history of this part of his life is merely a record of wasting struggles with misfortune. He seems to have been quite unable to take care of himself. He wrote and produced a number of pieces; he

managed several theatres, in different parts of England; and some of his enterprizes were successful; but he was almost always in difficulties. One of his last efforts, in London, was for the establishment of a theatrical paper, called the "Opera Glass," which he edited during a part of the year 1826. It gave him continual anxiety, and at last brought on a fever, from which he barely escaped alive. This sort of experience in foreign lands finally became monotonous, and he resolved to return to the United States. He arrived in New-York, January 16th, 1833, having been absent twenty years. Most of Payne's plays were written during his residence abroad, and nearly all of them were first produced in English theatres. His tragedies are: "Brutus; or, The Fall of Tarquin;" "Romulus," written for Edwin Forrest, but never performed; "Virginia; or, The Patrician's Perfidy;" "Oswali, of Athens;" "Richelieu; or, The Broken Heart;" "The Italian Bride;" "Lovers' Vows;" and "The Wanderer"—written when he was fourteen years of age. "Brutus" was first produced December 3d, 1818, at Drury Lane, with a prologue written by Rev. Dr. Croly, and it ran fifty-one nights. The part of *Brutus* was nobly acted by Edmund Kean. The tragedy of "Richelieu," which was originally dedicated to Washington Irving, was also first produced at Drury Lane. It seems to have been based on Duval's play, "La Jeunesse de Richelieu." In our day it has been somewhat modernized by Mrs. Catherine Farren; and it is still occasionally played, as "The Bankrupt's Wife." Payne's dramas, twenty-one in number, are named as follows: "The Spanish Husband;" "Thérése; or, The Orphan of Geneva;" "Norah; or, The Girl of Erin;" "Adeline; or, Seduction;" "The Two Galley Slaves;" "The Rival Monarchs;" "Paoli;" "The Solitary of Mount Savage;" "Ali Pacha;" "The Inseparables;" "The Maid and Magpie;" "Accusation;" "The Guilty Mother;" "The Man of the Black Forest;" "Madame De Barri;" "The Festival of St. Mark;" "The Bridge of Kehl;" "The Judge and the Attorney;" "The Mill of the Lake;" "Mazeppa;" and "Novido, the Neapolitan." "Thérése" and "The Galley Slaves" are from the French.

Payne also wrote five operas, namely: "Clari, the Maid of Milan;" "The White Maid" (or, "The White Lady"); "The Tyrolese Peasant;" "Visitandines;" and "England's Good Old Days." "Clari, the Maid of Milan," was the most popular of these pieces. It contains the song of "Home, Sweet Home," for which the author received $200. It was first produced at Covent Garden, under the management of Charles Kemble, on May 8th, 1823. The music was written

by Sir Henry Bishop, who, however, obtained the air to "Sweet Home" from an old Sicilian melody. The original was found among his papers, after his death, but the name of the author is not known. Payne's farces are, "Fricandeau; or, The Coronet and the Cook;" "The Post Chaise;" "'T was I;" "Mrs. Smith;" "Love in Humble Life;" "The Lancers;" "Grandpapa;" "Peter Smink;" and "Not Invited." His comedies are, "Charles the Second; or, The Merry Monarch;" "Procrastination;" "Married and Single;" "Pilots at Home;" "Woman's Revenge;" and "All for the Best." Of these "Charles the Second" is still popular. Its incidents and situations are identical with those of "La Jeunesse de Henri V.;" but the dialogue differs, especially in the part of "Captain Copp," a character original with Payne. The piece was first produced at Covent Garden, in 1824, with Mr. Kemble as *Charles the Second.*

On his return to America, Payne was received with the cordiality naturally excited by the presence of a public favourite. Soon after his arrival, a complimentary benefit was offered to him, at the Park Theatre, where he played with distinguished success. He also received the testimonial of a public dinner, where much good feeling was illustrated with many speeches. Nor were the citizens of Boston less ardent in friendly demonstrations than those of New-York. On April 3d, 1833, he appeared there, by invitation, at the old Tremont Theatre, and played, for his benefit, in selections from "Love in Humble Life," "Thérése," "The Lancers," and "Charles the Second." This circumstance is noted by W. W. Clapp, in his excellent "Record of the Boston Stage," as follows: "Although the selection of the pieces was a very graceful compliment to the beneficiary, and very appropriate to the occasion, it proved unfortunate, as they had been acted here a hundred times. The night selected was also unpropitious, preceding, as it did, the general Fast, when many families in the city unite in general gatherings. These and other causes rendered the attempt—so far as pecuniary reward was intended—a partial failure; but the character of the audience gave proof of the estimation in which Mr. Payne was held, both as a man and as an author." A piece of verse, written for this occasion by Park Benjamin, was recited, as an "Address" by Mrs. George Barrett. At its close the band played "Sweet Home," and then, in answer to the general call, Payne made a speech of thanks.

Payne now established his residence in New-York, and issued proposals for a new magazine. His enterprize was designed on a grand scale, but it was never fulfilled. He also proposed to publish a "Life of the Saviour,"—as a sort of harmony of the Gospels,—but, finding

that such a book was already in existence, he abandoned the intention. Afterwards he took to politics, and, in the Summer of 1841, he received from President Tyler, the appointment of U. S. Consul at Tunis. Under Polk's administration he was recalled, but was re-appointed to the same Consulate by Daniel Webster, in 1850. He died at Tunis, April 9th, 1852.

It is impressive to reflect that the man who in writing the song of "Sweet Home" set to music one of the strongest emotions which agitate universal humanity should have been a wanderer most of his life, having no home, and finding his grave, at last, after the ebb and flow of sixty years, in a far off, foreign land. This circumstance, while it heightens the romantic interest of his experience, affords an index to his character. Refined, full of sensibility, guided by a true taste, and impelled by earnest aspirations, pure-hearted, amiable, unselfish, with the temperament of the philosopher and the poet, he was unfitted for rough contact with the world; and, having in many ways been checked and disappointed, he was driven into that isolation of mind and life which is the natural refuge of wounded sensibility and dejected ambition. Payne's life was what is called unsuccessful. His abilities did not, it is said, fulfil their early promise. He gained some reputation, indeed, and he wrote some good things, but he was always poor, and he died poor. But, throughout his life, he did, faithfully and well, whatever work there was for him to do, and he has left the pure memory of a gentleman. These lines are on his tomb-stone,—in St. George's cemetery, at Tunis, which overlooks the ruins of Carthage:

"Sure, when thy gentle spirit fled
To realms beyond the azure dome,
With arms outstretched God's angels said,
Welcome to Heaven's 'Home, Sweet Home!'"

WILLIAM WINTER.

II.—THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO BRUTUS.

"This tragedy is submitted to the public with the most grateful sense of the kindness with which it has been honoured. It was originally intended to be published as sent to the Theatre; but the omissions and changes consequent on its being performed were numerous. The reader will now find it in every respect a copy from the prompt-book.*

* This, of course, alludes to the original print of the tragedy. The present version, as described in my preface, differs from it in many respects.—W. W.

The imperfect lines which sometimes occur in the verse have arisen from this determination to make the conformity complete.

"Seven plays upon the subject of Brutus are before the public. Only two have been thought capable of representation, and those two did not long retain possession of the stage. In the present play I have had no hesitation in adopting the conception and language of my predecessors, wherever they seemed likely to strengthen the plan which I had prescribed. This has been so done as to allow of no injury to personal feelings or private property. Such obligations, to be culpable, must be secret; but it may be observed that no assistance of other writers can be available without an effort almost, if not altogether, as laborious as original composition.

"I am reluctant to select peculiar subjects of praise when I found zeal and politeness so universal; but I must be permitted to add my gratitude to the public admiration of Mr. Kean's most masterly and splendid performance of the principal character. Mrs. Glover, too, has claims on me which must not be forgotten. The play was introduced by her to the theatre, and its share of public favour must be largely attributed to the critical taste of this very amiable and intelligent woman.

"To the sub-committee and the manager I also beg to return my grateful thanks.

JOHN HOWARD PAYNE.

"Southampton Street, Covent Garden, London, Dec. 9, 1818."

III.—HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT BRUTUS.

"Lucius Junius Brutus figures in the legendary history of early Rome as the hero who overturned the monarchical and established the republican form of government. The legend runs that he was the son of a rich Roman. On his father's death, Tarquin the Proud took possession of the property, and put an elder brother to death, and Brutus himself only escaped the same fate by feigning idiocy. [Hence the name, Brutus—stupid.] The oracle of Delphi foretold that he should govern in Rome. Remembering his own wrongs, and gifted with the strength and wisdom of one who was fulfilling the decrees of fate, Brutus—when the foul crime committed by one of the royal family upon Lucretia had shocked the people—convoked them, placed himself at their head, and drove the kings from Rome. He is said to have been then elected one of the two first Consuls (509 B. C.). That his character as a stern old Roman hero

might be complete, the legend adds that he sacrificed to the new republic his own sons, detected in a conspiracy to destroy it; and that, at last, he fell in mortal combat, repelling an attack led on by one of the sons of Tarquin. Little more, however, can be said to be established upon sufficient historical evidence as to Brutus than that there existed a person of that name, who held high office in Rome, at a very early period."— CHAMBERS'S ENCYCLOPÆDIA, vol. ii., p. 390.

IV.—COSTUME, WEAPONS, AND OTHER ACCESSORIES FOR BRUTUS.

The historic period of "Brutus" was one of remote antiquity,—509 B. C.,—and it may be assumed that the accessories of Roman life, in his time, were less elaborate, sumptuous, and splendid than they became in a later age. Absolute accuracy in the scenes and dresses for this tragedy is impossible. A general conformity with the customs and attributes of ancient Rome should be deemed sufficient. These models are set forth in the following extract from Thomas Hope's "Costume of the Ancients" [H. G. Bohn, London, 1841], Vol. i, page 39, et seq.:—

"The pre-eminent dress of the Romans, and which distinguished them in the most marked way, as well from the Greeks as from the Barbarians, was the toga. This they seem to have derived from their neighbours the Etrurians; and it may be called their true national garb. In the earliest ages of Rome it appears to have been worn by the women as well as by the men, by the lowest orders as well as by the highest, at home as well as abroad, in the country as well as in town. Love of novelty probably caused it first to be relinquished by the women; next, motives of convenience, by the men in lower stations; and afterwards, fondness of ease and unconstraint, even by the men of higher rank, when enjoying the obscurity of private life, or the retirement of the country. From the unsuccessful attempts, however, first of Augustus, and afterwards of Domitian, entirely to abolish a dress which still continued to remind the people more forcibly than was wished of their ancient liberty, it appears that the toga remained the costume of state and representation with the patricians, nay, with the emperors themselves, unto the last days of Rome's undivided splendour; and we may, I think, assert that not until the empire was transferred to Constantinople did the toga become entirely superseded by that more decidedly Grecian dress, the pallium.

"Infinite have been the queries of the learned, whether the toga of the Romans was, like the peplum of the Greeks, a square piece of stuff;

whether it was a round one; or whether, preserving a medium between these two extremes, it offered one side straight, and the other rounded off in a semicircle. To judge from the numberless statues dressed in togas, in none of which there appear any corners perfectly square, though in all of them may be traced some hems or edges describing a straight, and others, a curved line, I am inclined to think the semicircular to have been the true form of the toga.

"Great pains have also been taken to discover whether the toga derived its form on the body, like the pallium, from the mere spontaneous throw of the whole garment, or, like modern dresses, from some studious and permanent contrivance to model and to fasten together the different component parts. No tacks or fastenings of any sort, indeed, are visible in the toga, but their existence may be inferred from the great formality and little variation displayed in its divisions and folds. In general the toga seems not only to have formed, as it were, a short sleeve to the right arm, which was left unconfined, but to have covered the left arm down to the wrist.

"A sort of loop or bag of folds was made to hang over the sloped drapery in front, and the folds were ample enough in the back to admit of the garment being occasionally drawn over the head, as it was customary to do during religious ceremonies, and also, probably, in rainy weather.

"The material of the toga was wool. The colour, in early ages, its own natural yellowish hue. In later periods this seems, however, only to have been retained in the togas of the higher orders; inferior persons wearing theirs dyed, and candidates for public offices bleached by an artificial process. In times of mourning the toga was worn black, or was left off altogether.

"Priests and magistrates wore the *toga pretexta*, or toga edged with a purple border, called pretexta. This toga pretexta was, as well as the bulla, or small round gold box suspended on the breast by way of an amulet, worn by all youths of noble birth, to the age of fifteen; when both these insignia of juvenility were deposed together, for the toga without rim or border, called the *toga pura*.

"The Knights wore the *trabea*, or toga striped with purple throughout; and the Generals during their triumphal entries were clad in a toga entirely of purple, to which gradually became added a rich embroidery of gold.

"The tunic, of later introduction among the Romans than the toga, was regarded as a species of luxury, and was discarded by those who displayed and affected humility, such as candidates and others. The tunic

of the men only reached half way down the thigh; longer tunics being regarded in the male sex as a mark of effeminacy, and left to women and to eastern nations. The inferior functionaries at sacrifices wore the tunic without the toga; so did the soldiers, when in the camp. The tunic of senators was edged round * with a broad purple border, called laticlavus; and that of the knights with a narrow purple border, called angusticlavus.

"I shall here observe that the hue denominated purple by the ancients seems to have run through all the various shades of colour intervening between scarlet, crimson, and the deep reddish blue called purple at the present day.

"The pallium, or mantle of the Greeks, from its being less cumbersome and trailing than the toga of the Romans, by degrees superseded the latter in the country and in the camp. When worn over armour, and fastened on the right shoulder with a clasp or button, this cloak assumed the name of paludamentum.

"The common people used to wear a sort of cloak made of very coarse brown wool, and provided with a hood, which was called cucullus. This hooded cloak, always given to Telesphorus, the youthful companion of Esculapius, remains to this day the usual protection against cold and wet with all the seafaring inhabitants both of the islands of the Archipelago and the shores of the Mediterranean.

"The Roman ladies wore, by way of under garment, a long tunic descending to the feet, and more peculiarly denominated *stola*. This vestment assumed all the variety of modification displayed in the corresponding attire of the Grecian females. Over the stola, they also adopted the Grecian peplum, under the name of palla; which palla, however, was never worn among the Romans, as the peplum was among the Greeks, by men. This external covering, as may be observed in the statues of Roman empresses, displayed the same varieties of drapery or throw at Rome as at Athens.

"The *togati* seem to have worn a sort of short boot or shoe, with straps crossed over the instep, called calceus. The foot covering of the ladies at first had the same shape; but by degrees this latter assumed all the varieties of form of the Grecian sandal. Like all other nations in whom were combined great opulence wherewith to foment the exuberances of fashion and little taste through which to check its pruriencies, the Romans carried to a great pitch the shapeless extravagance of some parts of their attire, as may be seen in the absurd head-dresses of the busts of Roman matrons, preserved in the Capitol.

* Or striped down the front. The controversy respecting this mark of dignity will be endless, unless some *painting* is discovered to settle the question.

"The Romans, like the Greeks, had peculiar dresses appropriated to peculiar offices and dignities. The Flamens, or priests of Jupiter, wore a pointed cap or helmet, called apex, with a ball of cotton wound round the spike. The priests that ministered to other deities wore the infula, or twisted fillet, from which descended on each side, along the neck, flowing ribands.

"Wreaths of various sorts were in use among the Romans, as well as among the Greeks, and were chiefly given as rewards of military achievements. The *corona castrensis*, wrought in imitation of a palisado, was presented to whoever had been the first to penetrate into an enemy's camp. The *corona muralis*, shaped in the semblance of battlements, to whoever had been the first to scale the walls of a besieged city. The civic crown, formed of oak leaves, to whoever had saved the life of a citizen; and the naval crown, composed of the *rostra*, or beaks of galleys, to whoever had been the first to board the vessel of an enemy.

"When the arts fell into a total decline, glitter of materials became the sole substitute for beauty of forms; and hence the Grecian and Roman portraits of the middle ages are loaded from head to foot with pearls and precious stones, intermixed with large cameos.

"The armour of the Romans seems chiefly to have been that of the Greeks of the same periods. The helmet with the fixed visor, and which required being thrown back in its whole in order to uncover the face, fell very early into disuse in the very heart of Greece itself, and never appears on Roman figures. On these the cuirass, or *lorica*, when belonging to distinguished personages, generally follows the outline of the abdomen, and appears hammered out into all the natural convexities and concavities of the human body. It was often enriched, on the belly, with embossed figures; on the breast with a Gorgon's head by way of amulet; and on the shoulder-plates with scrolls, thunderbolts, etc. This cuirass was made to open at the sides, where the breast and back plates joined by means of clasps and hinges. One or more rows of straps, richly adorned and fringed, descended by way of protection, not only over the thighs, but also down the upper arms. The cuirass of the common soldiers often was cut simply round, and destitute of such straps. Sometimes this latter was formed of metal hoops or plates, sliding over each other; sometimes of small scales, equally pliant; and sometimes of a plain surface of metal or leather. The Roman soldiers wore no greaves, but either used sandals tied with strings, or short boots laced before, and lined with the skin of some animal, of which the muzzle and claws were displayed as an ornamental finish.

"The Roman shield seems never to have resembled the large round

buckler used by the Greeks, nor the crescent-shaped one peculiar to the Asiatics; but to have offered an oblong square, or an oval, or a hexagon, or an octagon. The cavalry alone wore a circular shield, but of small dimensions, called parma. Each different legion had its peculiar device marked on its shields.

"As offensive weapons, the Romans had a sword, of somewhat greater length than that of the Greeks; * a long spear, of which they never quitted their hold; and a short javelin, which they used to throw to a distance. Their armies were moreover provided with archers and with slingers.

"Infinite were the variety and magnificence of their military insignia. These offered—fixed one over the other along the poles of spears—eagles, figures of victory, laurel wreaths, banners, tablets inscribed with the initials of the republic and the number of the legion, pateras for libations, consecrated fillets, and other civil, military, and religious emblems.

"The poops of the Roman galleys had for ornament the *aplustrum;* their prows, spurs shaped like swords, with which they hit and destroyed those of the enemy.

"The architecture of the Romans was only that of the Greeks when on its decline,—that of the Greeks, divested of its primitive consistency, and breadth, and chastity. From the circumstance, however, of all the wealth and population of every other country flowing by degrees to Rome, certain descriptions of buildings, such as circuses, amphitheatres, triumphal arches, aqueducts, and baths, seem to have become not only more numerous but more splendid in that capital of the world than any that could be erected in the small republics of Greece. The temples also at Rome, from the greater variety of worships, assumed a greater diversity of shapes.

"The altars of the Romans, as well as those of the Greeks, displayed a vast variety both of purposes and forms. Some were intended for burning incense only; others for receiving libations of milk or of wine; others for consuming the first-fruits of the earth; others for the sacrificing of victims. Many were only meant for show, and erected in commemoration of some signal event, or in gratitude for some important benefit. Of these altars some were round, some triangular, some square. They displayed, by way of ornament, sculptured skulls of such animals and wreaths of such fruits and flowers as were consecrated to the deity which they served to worship, mixed with sacred fillets, instruments of sacrifice, inscriptions, bas reliefs, etc.

* The Roman weapons were of steel.

"Among the sacred instruments observable in the processions and sacrifices of the Romans may be numbered the pastoral staff which Romulus made use of to mark out the different districts of his new city, and which afterwards, under the name of lituus, became the distinctive badge of honour of the augurs, who used it in the same way to mark out the different regions of the heavens, when drawing their prognostics. This lituus, together with the basin containing the lustral water, the aspergillum to sprinkle it, the simpulum or ewer for holding the consecrated wine, the cotton fillets for adorning the horns of the victim, the axe for slaying, and the single and double knives for cutting it up, are frequently represented in bas reliefs.

"In the decoration and furniture of their houses the Romans were very sumptuous. Rich marbles and gay arabescoes decorated the walls, elegant mosaic the floors of their apartments. On the ornaments of the triclinia or couches, on which they reclined at their feasts, they bestowed immense sums. The curule chairs or seats of state of the patricians were wrought in ivory; and prodigious is the number of beautiful utensils in marble and in bronze, richly chased and inlaid with silver, that have been found among the ruins of that comparatively insignificant provincial city, Pompeii. Natives of Greece seem at all times to have been employed to give and to execute the designs intended to display the taste and opulence of the Romans.

"The writing of these latter were contained in two different sorts of receptacles; namely, in rolls of papyrus or parchment, called *volumina;* and on tablets of box, ivory, or metal, called *codices*. When travelling they used to carry their manuscripts in a little round case, called *scrinium*."

RUY BLAS

VOL. III

Preface.

✠

THIS drama, though not, perhaps, impressive in the reading, has been found effective in the representation. The present version of it is a free translation,—by an unknown hand,—considerably altered from the original, and furnished with Edwin Booth's stage directions. The French piece, by Victor Hugo, is in five acts, and it incorporates into the action the character of Don Cæsar de Bazan, the cousin, and the victim, of Don Salluste. By excising that part, by giving some slight prominence to the part of Gudiel, and by a few transpositions and textual changes, the piece is made to tell its story in three acts, as fully as it would otherwise do in five. The original is in verse. An English translation of it, also in verse,—but in four acts,—was produced at the Princess's Theatre, London, on October 27th, 1860, under the auspices of Charles Fechter, who personated Ruy Blas; and this, in an adapted form, has been made known on the American stage. The period of Ruy Blas is the end of the 17th century—1692. The monarch referred to in its text—Charles II., of Spain—reigned over that country from 1661 to 1700, and was involved in several wars with Louis XIV., of France, whose policy and force alike aimed at securing the succession of the Spanish crown to the House of Bourbon.

The ideal of love which the author has herein exhibited is idolatrous—a passion like that of Wyatt for Anne Bullen, or that of Chastelard for Mary Stuart; a passion suggestive of Sir Gallahad, in its lofty purity, and of the lover of Byron's Dream, in its ecstatic abandonment.

> *"There was but one belovèd face on earth,*
> *And that was shining on him."*

Ruy Blas was first produced on November 8th, 1838, in Paris, at the Théâtre de la Renaissance. Frederick Lemaître acted its hero. The reaction against the classic drama in France, which Victor Hugo's genius had induced, and which the great triumph of his Hernani had signalized, was potent in that period; and Ruy Blas, accordingly,—notwithstanding its obvious faults of artifice, exaggeration, and tumidity,—was received with enthusiasm. The original representative of the Queen was Mme. Louise Beaudoin, an actress not otherwise known to fame. The original Don Cæsar de Bazan—a part which, in the French play, is important, but has here been discarded—was M. St. Firmin; who divided with M. Lemaître the success of the Parisian representation. No French actor of any note, since Lemaître, is remembered in association with Ruy Blas. Fechter's fame in the part was won in English. All Victor Hugo's plays were, as is well known, banished from the French stage, during the second empire—from 1852 to 1871. Since the latter year, Ruy Blas has been acted in Paris, at the Odeon, with M. Lafontaine as Ruy, and M Melingue as Don Cæsar.

W. W.

New-York, October 30th, 1878.

"There is a garden in her face,
Where roses and white lilies blow."—OLD SONG.

"A youth to fortune and to fame unknown."—GRAY.

"I thought of tales that by the winter hearth
Old gossips tell—how maidens sprung from kings
Have stooped from their high sphere: how love, like death,
Levels all ranks, and lays the shepherd's crook
Beside the sceptre."—BULWER.

"I will be
The sun o' thy life, faithful through every season;
And thou shalt be my flower perennial,
My bud of beauty, my imperial rose,
My passion-flower; and I will wear thee here,
Here on my heart, and thou shalt never fade!
I'll love thee mightily, my queen."—BARRY CORNWALL.

"If thou didst ever anything believe,
Believe how I love thee, believe how near
My soul is to its doom."—KEATS.

"She loves, and she confesses too;
There's then at last no more to do."—COWLEY.

"What can it matter, Margaret,
What songs below the waning stars
The lion-heart Plantagenet
Sang, looking through his prison-bars?
Exquisite Margaret, who can tell
The last wild thought of Chatelet,
Just ere the falling axe did part
The burning brain from the true heart,
Even in her sight he loved so well?"—TENNYSON.

"The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit.
The rest is silence."—SHAKESPEARE.

Persons Represented.

✠

DON SALLUSTE, *Marquis of Finlas, Prime Minister.*

DON BASTO.
DON PEDRO.
DON MANUEL.
DON PRIEGO.
COUNT OF ALBA.
COUNT OF CAMPOREAL.
} *Grandees of Spain.*

GUDIEL, *Secretary to Don Salluste.*

RUY BLAS.

MARIANNE OF NEUBORG, *called Queen of Spain.*

DONNA CASILDA, *Maid of Honour to the Queen.*

DUCHESS OF ALBUQUERQUE, *Duenna to the Queen.*

LORDS, LADIES, PAGES, and other ATTENDANTS.

Place and Time.

✠

SCENE.—*Madrid, in Spain.*

PERIOD.—*The Seventeenth Century* [*1692*].

TIME OF ACTION.—*There is a lapse of six months between the First and Second Acts, and of one day between the Second and Third. The action is supposed to occupy but a few hours.*

RUY BLAS.

Act First.

Scene. MADRID. A HALL IN THE ROYAL PALACE DOORS R. AND L. U. E. ARCH WITH CURTAINS, C. LARGE CHAIR, R. TABLE, WITH WRITING MATERIALS, L.

[*Enter Don Salluste and Gudiel,* L. U. E. *Don Salluste gives his hat, cloak, and sword to Gudiel, who, during Don Salluste's first speech, places them on chair,* R.

Sal.

Close the door, Gudiel. The day has come, but my night begins; my reign is over. The lazy household sleeps—although the sun is up, and wakes the day to witness my disgrace.

Gud.

Disgrace! my lord!

Sal.

Yes, Gudiel; my reign is ended.

Gud.

My lord!

Sal.

Yes, ended; degraded, exiled—in a day! My towering fortunes lie in ruins at my feet.

Gud.

May I ask the cause?

Sal.

'Sdeath! I 'm ashamed to tell it. But listen—and be secret. A love affair—ha! ha! A girl of some slight beauty, but no birth—a follower of the queen's, as she is called,—though she 's no queen as yet; she is but betrothed, and wears the ring without the rights of marriage. Well, I cast my eyes upon this girl—this silly chit—about a year ago. This creature, Gudiel, rushes to the queen, dragging her brat into the royal chamber, and weeps, and wails, and howls—plebeian fool! The queen, sir, sends for me and says, forsooth, the wench being of her suite, I must espouse her! Do you hear!—espouse! I refused, flatly: for the which—I 'm banished! You hear—banished. Twenty years of labour, night and day, my office, power, presidency of the high court of Alcades, revenues, patronage, influence and trust, all! which yesterday seemed within my grasp; all that I possessed, and all that felt assured of winning—all these have crumbled into dust, amid the jeers and laughter of the court!

Gud.

'T is not yet known!

Sal.

It will be known before the night again descends. But let us go. I will not hear the mocking of the crowd. With pride untamed, and crest erect, I will not stay to fall, but vanish ere——O, I choke with rage! I 'll be revenged.—I 'll lay a mine shall scatter all my foes.

Gud.

Our new queen hath struck this blow?

Sal.

The queen! She is not, and never shall be queen. By proxy married to the king. He, an animal that loves the chase—and has a vulgar liason to boot—has again postponed the actual marriage.

Gud.

The people wonder at this strange delay.

Sal.

This delay will serve my turn. Although to me hateful, she 'd fain do right, and has a loving, noble nature. She 'd be a good wife to this brutish thing we honour as a king—but she 's a woman—neglected, slighted,—feels it,—and will, when tempted, fall: at least, I 'll set the snare and place it in her path. [*Sits at table*, L.

Who can be trusted to remain here, in your stead? I shall need you near me.

Gud.

The orphan son of an old and valued friend. A youth, discreet and brave I think; subdued by some strange sorrow; he came to me, in rags, some three months since, and, death depriving you of Sautalon, I gave the vacancy to Ruy Blas.

Sal.

'T is well. I am satisfied. Your judgment, my trusty Gudiel, never errs. Where is he?

Gud.

My lord, he attends for what directions you may deem needful.

Sal. [*Music.*

He may enter.

Gud. [*Goes to door and calls.*

Ruy! Ruy Blas! [*Enter Ruy. Exit Gudiel.*

Ruy.

My lord.

[*Don Salluste, at table, carelessly looks up—then starts. Music ceases.*

Sal. [*Aside.*

Great heaven! What fatality is this? The very self of my spendthrift cousin, Cæsar! Can he be moulded to my will, and made the instrument? Young, inexperienced, doubtless romantic; time wanes; I must be quick, though cautious. [*Aloud.*

Ruy Blas!

Ruy.

My lord!

Sal.

Were you ever until now in service?

Ruy.

Never, my lord, before I entered yours.

Sal.

You will find me a good master, if you serve me well. I have but one lesson to give you. While with me, you must have neither ears, eyes, nor thought, except at my will; you must have but one quality—obedience.

Ruy.

I 'll do my best, my lord.

Sal.

Has any one in Madrid yet seen you in that garb?

Ruy.

Save Gudiel, none, my lord.

Sal.

'T is well. During my absence you will hold his position here; if I find you competent and faithful, above all discreet, you shall retain it. Call him hither. [*Music.*

Ruy.

Gudiel! [*Enter Gudiel* L. U. E.

[*From Ruy's entrance until this point Don Salluste remains seated, closely examining Ruy, but with apparent indifference—looking over papers, etc.*

Sal. [*To Gudiel.*

He may retire. [*Music ceases.*

[*Exit Ruy, at sign from Gudiel,* L. U. E.

Gudiel, I like that youth. You know him well; is he ambitious?

Gud.

My lord, I have not questioned him, nor sought his confidence; from his boyhood, until three months since we have been strangers. Can he be of use to you?

Sal.

Great use; if he is ambitious, brave, and wise.—Hold conference with him here; I will withdraw, and judge by what I hear how capable he may be to aid me in the work I have in hand; on which, perhaps, the fate of Spain depends. So probe him well; find the main-spring of his heart's desire; and if I find him what his appearance indicates, honour and fortune shall be his.

Gud.

My lord, you shall be satisfied.

[*Don Salluste retires. Gudiel goes to door* L. U. E., *and calls:*

Ruy! Come hither. [*Enter Ruy* L. U. E.

Young friend, ere I depart for Finlas with our master, perhaps to be absent months, I 'd fain learn something

of you—your hopes and griefs—for tho' but yet a boy, the sadness of your countenance tells of a canker at the heart, to which youth should be a stranger.

[*Don Salluste watches this scene from behind curtains, showing himself but twice: once, at* "Couldst thou see within,"—*then, at* "I—I madly love the queen."

Ruy.

O, Gudiel! I have longed to speak, to open my heart to some true, sympathizing friend, who would not sneer at my despair; for despair it was that drove me to your door, a beggar for a menial post, at which my heart revolts, that I might be near the delicious poisoned fount from which my soul drinks madness.

Gud.

What is it ails thee, boy?

Ruy.

Dare I speak? Yes. For in your eyes I see compassion—pity; 't is all that I can hope for, and in your heart I feel it is not coupled with contempt. Beneath this sullying and dishonouring garb my soul chafes madly for relief; and, pride and manhood crushed, like a peevish child, I must give vent in words to this pent-up agony, or else my heart will break. An orphan, reared by charity, taught science and the pride that springs from knowledge, instead of a mechanic I am a dreamer. Filled with ambitious pride, I toiled and toiled—to what end? I dreamed I marched to honours! I had hope in fate, and thought the future would repay the past. I built myself an edifice of thoughts, ideas, chimeras, madness! I pitied Spain, and fancied I was born to rescue her. Poor fool! I thought the world had need of me; lo! the result you see—I am a lacquey.

Gud.

Poor youth! Hunger is indeed a tyrant; and when by necessity we are compelled to bow before him the grand-

est imagination stoops the lowest and suffers most. But fortune hath its ebb and flow; our master likes you, is disposed to favour you; deserve his confidence; he will advance you, perhaps, to the very point at which your wildest fancy aims. Hope yet.

Ruy.

No, no; it is impossible! Within my breast a serpent, with breath of flame, winds round and round my heart its coils of burning venom. Ah, couldst thou see within!

[*Don Salluste appears at back, for an instant.*

Gud.

I cannot understand.

Ruy.

Suppose, invent, imagine, dream! Rack thy brains and search for something wild, incalculable, mad; a dazzling fatality; a passion that, like delicious poison, draws my soul towards an abyss where crime and ruin wait; thou canst not guess,—who could? Gudiel, into the gulf towards which my dread fate drags me, plunge thine eyes. I madly love the queen!

[*Don Salluste appears for an instant, at back.*

Gud.

Great heaven!

Sal. [*Aside, and withdrawing.*

He 's mine!

Gud.

The queen!

Ruy.

Yes! Despise me if you will, I love her with heart of flame, with veins of fire! So helpless, beautiful, and young! So wretched 'mid the vile intrigues of this polluted court! O, I would give the jewel of my mind to be but one of

those young cavaliers who are permitted to approach the queen, with plumes upon their bonnets and pride upon their brows—those living libels on humanity! But to be thus before her in livery—a—lacquey! Ah, pity me, my friend! Pity me, O heaven!

Gud.

I do, my son; but tell me, how grew this fatal passion, and since when?

Ruy.

I do not know. The madman cannot date the birth of his insanity. I think of her as prisoners think of liberty; as the blind dream of the light. I love her, that 's all I know—I love her.

Gud.

Stifle this hopeless passion.

Ruy.

'T will die the day she weds the king. Like one condemned to death on a fixed day, who, yet, with pulse of health full within his heart, enjoys the sense of life, so my love is doomed, must perish or destroy me, when she weds; but till then it is privileged to live, to enjoy ecstatic dreams.

Gud.

Has she e'er seen thee?

Ruy.

No! Pardon me—you asked me, did you not, how and when this passion first had being? A month before I learned that thou wert here—when all seemed hopeless, and life had grown a torture more than I could bear—I resolved on self-destruction. Hastening through the forest with this intent I passed the convent of Rosara, as she came forth from her devotions. My soul seemed hell! when suddenly her beauteous face, like some sad angel's,

lighted all within, rekindled hope, and bade me live for her—her slave! Unknown,—unseen,—yet still to live, if but to breathe the air she breathes. To do her service, haply, and be repaid by death in doing it. You see, my friend, I'm mad—yes, mad!

Gud.

Since you came hither?

Ruy.

I 've been debarred the joy of seeing her. The only recompense I hoped for now seems further from my reach than ever. My only solace is to seek in the woods a rare blue flower 't is said she loves; a flower of Germany—her native land. I go each day to gather them, and when midnight falls I, like a thief, climb o'er her garden wall and place them near a bank, on which—I learned from one of her young pages—she oft reclines to read. Last night I placed a letter 'mid the flowers—but why should I recite these follies? I know some night I may be speared or shot by the palace guards; but what care I? I shall die near her—the sweetest, holiest death for Ruy Blas! But go, my friend, and leave the miserable wretch who dares to hide beneath a lacquey's garb the passions of a king.

[*Ruy falls in chair*, L. *A noise is heard at back.*

Gud.

Hark! Don Salluste comes—recover yourself.

[*Don Salluste enters hurriedly, not noting Ruy Blas, who rises quickly and stands* L.

Gud.

My lord.

Sal.

Gudiel, a word with you. [*Whispers.*
Set forth at once—depart. [*Exit Gudiel.*
The very man I want. [*Aside.*

Ha! ha! [*Aloud.*

How lightly beats my heart to-day! Ruy Blas, I need your aid immediately; you shall be my secretary—doff that livery—off with it at once, and take your station at the table.

[*Ruy Blas takes seat at table and writes as directed.*

Ruy, I am in love with a little angel, fresh from Paradise. Think you I am too stern and grim in look to have a tender heart? Ha! ha! Love! the rascal, hath hit even me—Salluste. I am about to dictate a billet-doux. I have full faith in you and your discretion—write! [*Music, low and sad.*

"My queen! My heart's queen! A doom of danger hangs o'er my head—thou canst avert the blow, and only thou. Come to me instantly—without thee I am lost. My safety—fate—my life is in thy hands. O, come to me, all powerful; I kiss thy hands and wait thee."

To touch the heart of woman it is best to swear there is danger hovering o'er you.

"A private door that leads from the garden is open—'t will admit thee unobserved." [*Music ceases.*

Hast done?

Ruy.

Your signature?

Sal.

No—sign it "Cæsar!" 'T is the name she calls me.

Ruy.

Will not the hand betray it?

Sal.

I 'll put my seal on 't.

Ruy.

Shall I address the letter?

Sal.

No. I 'll do that. So give it me! [*Takes letter.*
Ruy, I find you trustworthy, discreet, and faithful; I would mark my recognition of it. I 'd help to lift you to a better fate — one worthier of you. Trust me, you shall rise! Now, write again. [*Same music.*
"I, Ruy Blas, servant to the Marquis of Finlas, here engage, on all occasions, public or private, to render to my master and my lord the humble service of a faithful lacquey!" [*Music ceases.*
So, sign it,— now the date — good! — give it me.
[*Takes letter.*
'Tis near the hour when the queen should pass yon gallery, on her way to the royal chapel. You shall see her gracious majesty, Ruy Blas: but first, hand me my sword.
[*Ruy gets sword from chair,* R.
'T is handsome, is it not? The hilt 's of gold, and set with precious stones. Put it on — nay, put it on; I'd see the effect: why, I vow! you have the air of a true cavalier — a lord of noble birth and breeding. You, perhaps, may wear a sword some day. [*Voices heard.*
They come.

[*Two pages draw back the curtain from arch. Don Pedro, Don Basto, Don Manuel, Don Priego, and Courtiers are discovered, in conversation, in the chamber. As they come forward, Don Salluste quickly takes his cloak from chair and envelopes Ruy before the lords observe him.*

Gentlemen, permit me to present to your kindly notice, my young cousin, Cæsar de Bazan.

All.

Don Cæsar!

Ruy.

Great Heaven!

Sal.

Silence! [*Aside, to Ruy.*

Bas.

We thought you dead!

Prie.

'Twas so reported!

Man.

We are much honoured!

Ped.

Sir, most welcome!

All speak simultaneously, bowing as they speak.

Ruy. [*To Sal.*

My Lord!

Sal.

Call me cousin, Cæsar! We *are* cousins, you know; the Bazans are sufficiently frank about their origin and relatives. You are of Arragon—I of Portugal; your branch is not less high than mine; I am the fruit of one, you the flower of the other.

[*Enter Alba.*

Alba.

Ahem! What 's this—what 's this! of fruits and flowers—what—what? I beg to inform you, Don Salluste, that I, as Marquis de Santa Cruz, am the recognized representative of our house, the head, the stem, the fruit, the flower—yea, the very tree, root, branch and sap of the stock Bazan. I can allow no error to creep abroad; I—I——

Sal.

My dear Marquis, no one dare dispute your rights; I was but presenting to these gentlemen our cousin, Cæsar, who has suddenly returned.

Alba.

What, from the other world!

[*All laugh.*

Sal.

No, from the Indies.

Alba.

Let me see. Yes, yes, indeed; I recognize him. How like his mother! Your hand, my cousin.

Sal.

You recognize him?

Alba.

I should think so! I was one of the witnesses to his birth. [*All laugh.*
I should not have known him. [*Aside.*

Sal.

Ten years abroad——

Ruy.

My lord!

Sal. [*Aside to Ruy.*

When your fortune rises does your spirit sink? Be blind, be dumb, be wise! Trust all to me.

[*Aloud.*

Yes, here is the spendthrift. His rich inheritance—you remember it, Marquis—scattered to the winds. In three years, ruined; but he had the heart of a lion, and set to work to retrieve his fortunes, and lo! here he is, fresh from India, with a galleon filled with treasure!

[*All bow and exclaim at once.*

All.

Sir!

Alba.

I had a great regard for your mother, sir!

[*Shaking hands with Ruy.*

Gods! How like his mother!

Sal.

As I am now in disgrace and shall be absent from Madrid, may I ask your interest, gentlemen, in his behalf?

All.

Assuredly — My voice is his — Decidedly.

[*March pp. — After their assurances to Ruy, all the lords put on their hats and turn towards back of scene.*

Ruy. [*To Don Salluste.*

To what will this lead?

Sal.

Ruy, be fearless; walk blindfold on; my eyes shall see for thee, my hand direct. Be brave! Ascend the hill at whose high top thy fortune smiles, and woos thee to embrace her.

[*Music, louder.*

Voice. [*Outside.*

The queen!

Ruy.

My lord!

Sal.

[*Forcing his hat into Ruy's hand.*

Put it on; put it on. Use your right.

[*Ruy mechanically puts on hat.*

A grandee of Spain stands covered in the presence of the queen.

All.

The queen!

[*The Queen enters, above, preceded and followed by Lords and Ladies. Picture.*

CURTAIN.

Act Second.

Scene First. MADRID. ANOTHER HALL IN THE ROYAL PALACE. LARGE BOW-WINDOW R. C.: SEVERAL LADIES SEATED NEAR IT. QUEEN DISCOVERED AT TABLE R. DUCHESS OF ALBUQUERQUE IN LARGE CHAIR, L., READING. CASILDA SITTING AT FEET OF THE QUEEN.

Queen. [*In soliloquy.*

I cannot chase the image from my thoughts. I dream of him by night; I think of him by day. I see him, grave and joyless, as he bent o'er my hand, and took his leave. Don Salluste hates me. Yes, his proud eye tells it; and I fear him. His smile of state but cloaks revenge,—a poisoned dagger sheathed in courtesy. [*She rises.*

Duch.

Ladies! [*Rising.*

Ladies, the queen has risen.

[*They all rise, languidly, and sit when the Queen motions to them to do so.*

Queen. [*Still in soliloquy.*

He is gone, and I should be at ease. Still, I have a presentiment of ill. He is my evil genius! I fancy the demon lurks around the little paradise of my lone musings. The flowers, the letter, the symbols of some unknown heart's devotion—ah, should his malice pierce that mystery, the solace of my wretched life were lost, destroyed, defiled!

[*To Casilda.*

Casilda, do my poor pensioners attend?

Cas.

Madam, they do, beneath the balcony.

Duch.

[*Each time the Duchess speaks, she rises, and at conclusion of her remarks sits, very stiff and stately.*

Pardon, your majesty. The etiquette of this great court of Spain does not permit the queen to show herself unto the people, save on state occasions.

Queen.

Very well! Throw them my purse, Casilda. Let us play some game to pass away the tedious time.

Duch.

Pardon, your majesty. Etiquette forbids! The queen may not amuse herself, excepting with her equals, kings or queens, or princes and princesses of the blood royal of the kingdom.

Queen. [*Irritated.*

But none are here!

Duch.

His majesty, alas! has no relations. [*Curtseys.*

Queen.

Casilda, Isabella, let us walk.

Duch.

Pardon, your majesty! Etiquette of this great court of Spain exacts that when the queen doth condescend to walk each door is opened by a grandee, who holds the key. Not one grandee is in the palace now; therefore, your majesty must please remain.

Queen.

Am I a prisoner?

Duch.

Pardon; as mistress of the royal household, as duenna to the queen of Spain, until the festal day that dawns upon the marriage I fulfill my duty.

Queen.

Casilda, you pity me, do you not?

Cas.

Your majesty——

Queen.

No matter. Bring fruit and wine. Ladies, I invite you.

Duch.

Pardon, your majesty! Etiquette compels the queen of Spain, unless the king is by, to eat alone.

Queen.

The king! The king neglects me, even before we 're wed. I never see him! He 's always at the chase. For the six months I 've been in Spain, I 've not seen him six times.

Cas. [*Aside.*

Poor lady! In this dreary court, condemned to pass her days so drearily; hemmed in by etiquette and stupid forms!

Madam! [*To Queen, who is in a reverie.*

Queen.

Casilda!

Cas.

You seem sad.

Queen.

Sad! E'en captives are allowed that liberty.

Cas. [*Whispering.*

The secret door I told you of frees you to pass at pleasure.

Queen.

True; I 'd forgotten. I was thinking then of my dear home in Germany — my sister; and how we played together 'neath the trees; and laughed and sang; until one sad, sad day, a man in black came up to me, and said: "You are betrothed to the king of Spain!" My father triumphed and my mother wept. I think, in private, both were sorry for it. I came here, to learn the duties of a queen, ere I become the wife unto a king. 'T is a dull place, your court: the little birds I brought from home all died since they 've been here. I am a prisoner; bound down by forms; for me the sun smiles not upon the flowers; for me the clouds find not a mirror in the stream. Nature is lost to me!

Cas.

Madam, look from this casement. 'T is a lovely view; the woods, the river — see.

[*Queen is going towards casement.*

Duch.

Pardon, your majesty! Etiquette permits not the queen of Spain to look out of a casement, opened or shut.

Queen.

Am I forbidden, then, to gaze upon the liberty of others? [*Aside.*

No pastime but the dangerous one of weaving a romance about the unknown being whose voiceless worship is symbolized by my best loved flowers! Ah, heaven shield me from that temptation!

[*Enter two pages,* L. 2. E., *ushering in Alba.*

Page.

Count Alba. From the king.

[*Exeunt pages. Alba produces letter.*

Queen.

Heaven has heard my prayer! A letter of affectionate remembrance, to recall me to my sense of duty — gratitude. Give it me quickly. [*Duchess quickly interposes.*

Duch.

Whence comes the letter?

Alba.

From Aranguez, madam, where the king is hunting.

Queen.

I thank his grace. He has had compassion on my ennui, and doubtless sends me a letter full of pleasant tidings. Give it me.

Duch. [*Takes letter.*

Pardon, your majesty! The etiquette of this great court of Spain demands that I, as mistress of the royal household, in absence of the king, should first open and read all letters addressed to the queen of Spain.

[*Alba goes up to ladies at window.*

Queen.

Again — Ah, well! read it.

Duch.

[*Slowly, after putting on spectacles.*

"Madam. There's a high wind. I have killed six wolves.

(Signed) "CARLOS."

Queen.

Is that all?

Duch.

Yes, your majesty, all!

Queen.

Alas!

Cas. [*Aside.*

He has "killed six wolves!" What an agreeable piece of information to forward to his betrothed bride—her gentle heart longing for some kind word! "Killed six wolves!" I wish the rest of the pack may revenge their brethren, and kill him! "It blows a high wind." I hope it may blow him off his horse!

Duch. [*Offering letter.*

Does your majesty wish to read this victorious record of his majesty's exploits?

Queen.

No.

Cas. [*Aside to Duchess.*

Is that really all?

Duch.

All. And a great deal, too! Should there be more? The king was hunting; he paused to write the number he had killed, and the state of the weather. It is a very important and royal letter indeed, and should be enrolled in the archives of the state. [*Examining letter.*

Stay! His majesty did not write this. He but dictated.

Queen. [*Taking letter.*

No, 't is not his hand; the signature alone is his.

[*Looking more curiously at letter, and aside.*

Ah, is this some illusion? This writing is the same as that of the letter received with the flowers. What can this mean? Do they come then from a courtier? [*To Alba.*

Know you who it was that wrote this letter at the king's dictation?

Alba.

The Duke Olmedo.

Queen.

Duke Olmedo?

Duch.

The first minister.

Alba.

Who galloped hither, and now waits for me in the council chamber.

Queen.

Duke Olmedo! [*Queen sits at table,* R., *with letter.*

Duch.

A scion of the great house of Bazan; a perfect and accomplished cavalier, his noble birth bursting through every look.

Cas.

[*To one of the ladies, overheard by Alba.*

The handsomest young gallant of them all. I loved him at first sight, although, alas, I 've not changed word with him; but I 've a plan to send to-night to him by old Paquita. I die with curiosity to hear how he makes love.

[*Alba comes down,* L., *in rage.*

Alba. [*Aside.*

Indeed. She loves him, then! and he is my twenty-third successful rival. I 'll pick a quarrel with, and kill him. Yes, Olmedo 's dead.

Your majesty, may it please you I retire? [*To Queen.*

[*She bows. He crosses, while the Queen and Duchess speak.*

Queen.

The duke Olmedo.

Duch.

Don Cæsar de Bazan, duke of Olmedo.

Alba.

Don Cæsar de Bazan, duke of——dead. [*Exit.*

[*Casilda speaks aside, to ladies, at Alba's exit.*

Cas.

The old count is jealous—furious. I must get him out of the way—even if I 'm obliged to kiss him—or a duel may ensue.

Queen.

Is council held to-day?

Duch.

Madam, it is. [*March pp.*

Cas.

See! The duke is passing through the court-yard, going to the council chamber.

[*All the ladies crowd to window.*

Queen. [*Going toward window.*

Ah, I would see him. [*Ladies fall back from window.*

Duch.

Pardon, your majesty; but the etiquette of this great court of Spain forbids——

Queen. [*Aside.*

Etiquette? O, how gladly would I exchange your imperceptible fetters for the iron chains that weigh down the malefactor! [*To Duchess.*

Who is the duke of Olmedo? His title is a new one to me.

Duch.

A young nobleman of the house of Bazan, recommended to the king, and to me, by the Marquis de Santa Cruz. He is a most accomplished gentleman, of rare talent for government.

Queen.

You mean, I suppose, for intrigue.

Duch.

No, your majesty. He is distinguished by high bearing and a great regard for decorum and etiquette. Since I have been in office I have had the aid of his authority in re-establishing all those ancient forms and strict rules about egress and ingress to and from the palace which prevent all chance of easy approach to the person of your majesty.

Queen.

So, then, I have to thank him for all these restrictions which have, of late, made life a burden to me.

Duch.

Which tend to elevate and make more sacred the majesty of the queen of Spain.

Queen. [*Aside.*

I see the snare. Ah, is 't possible that a noble—that a man could lend himself to further a plot against a woman, by such a vile system of petty torture?

[*Aloud.*

I cannot believe it.

Duch.

Your pardon. As the officers and servants of the court had fallen into habits of neglect in these matters, and were difficult to reclaim, to enforce my directions, here is an order of state commanding their observance; written and signed by the duke, with an abstract of the various rules to be revived, and the watches to be kept by the guards and pages.

Queen. [*Aside, taking paper.*

'T is the same hand. Ah, base——

[*To Duchess.*

Will you permit me to retain for a short time this

precious document, and leave me to peruse it at leisure, that I may obtain some knowledge of what I am free to do, and what 's forbidden ?

Duch.

Willingly, your majesty. A queen of Spain should be perfect mistress of court etiquette, and cannot be better employed than in its study. You will find it very edifying and interesting reading, I am sure. Ladies, it is the festival of Kunegunda, the patroness of decorum. Let us go and make an obeisance at her shrine, in the royal chapel, and I shall afterwards entertain you by reading her life.

Cas. [*Aside.*

In twenty-six chapters — what a treat! I should fall asleep.

[*The Duchess makes a very stately curtsey, which all the ladies mimic — hardly restraining their laughter. Exeunt* L. 2. E. *Duchess, and all the ladies except Casilda, who, when Duchess has turned away, runs to Queen, kneels, and kisses her hand.*

But now to pacify Count Alba. *Exit Casilda.*

Queen.

[*Takes letter from her breast and compares it with paper.*

The same — the same. O, infamy!

[*Dashes letter on table.*

Ah, heaven, thou hast punished me for cherishing in my heart the vain dream of being loved! These flowers, this letter, these restrictions — all were portions of the same plot to humble me. Annoyance — torture on the one hand, temptation on the other. Did he not say he was of the house of Bazan — a relative, no doubt, of Don Salluste; in league with him; perhaps his instrument. But I shall defeat, nay, triumph over both. I shall meet this plotting —

this base courtier duke, and in full council denounce his treason; cast his flowers and his letter at his feet, and rend his order too—nay, more, attach him as a traitor to his sovereign! For once, the queen of Spain, so called, shall play, indeed, the queen, and vindicate the outraged woman too. The means, thank heaven, I have at hand. Casilda showed me a passage leading from this apartment to a secret cabinet within the council chamber,—made by Philip II., that he might overhear, while concealed in it, his ministers debate: a mean design, but it will serve me now to reach the council in despite the duke's high mandate. Quick—the letter—order—and the flowers.

[*Looks at flowers.*

Of what sweet thoughts were they the types to me; so delicate and pure I deemed the mystic love they came to represent! and was it all a dream, sad heart—a dream? Base cunning; that outrages the holiest symbols of true love,—and calls for quick and bitter vengeance!

[*Exit* L. 2. E.

Scene Second. { COUNCIL CHAMBER IN THE ROYAL PALACE. ARCH, WITH STEPS AND PLATFORM C. LARGE TABLE ON WHICH ARE PAPERS, BOOKS, PENS, INK, ETC., ETC., L. SEVERAL LARGE CHAIRS AROUND IT. SMALLER TABLE, ALSO FURNISHED WITH WRITING MATERIALS, R. CHAIRS R. LARGE WINDOW R. 2. E. SECRET PANEL L. DON MANUEL, CAMPOREAL, DON BASTO, DON PRIEGO, DON PEDRO, AND OTHER NOBLEMEN DISCOVERED, SEATED, OR LOUNGING ABOUT THE ROOM.

Man.

His sudden rise is most mysterious.

Camp.

The order of the Golden Fleece; the office of state secretary; minister of finance—prime minister; and now made duke of Olmedo.

Man.

All in six months.

Camp.

A powerful influence supports and forwards all his wishes.

Man. [*Cautiously.*

Yes, the queen.

Camp.

Nay, although, neglected by her husband, she might be well tempted to cast her eye upon our chivalrous minister, they never meet. My suspicions at first took the course that yours did; but I have watched well, and can find no trace or symptom of communication between them. I do not think she has ever seen him. He lives, when out of the council chamber, a secluded life, in the palace that formerly belonged to his cousin, Don Salluste; attended only by a couple of dumb servants. He receives no visitors.

Man.

All this is very singular and suspicious.

[*Enter Alba* C.

Bas.

Don Cæsar is a man of great ambition and surpassing genius.

Alba. [*Advancing.*

He 's clever; but, gentlemen, he owes a great deal to my influence. I it was who recommended him to the king; I it was who guided his policy by my advice, and to me he owes nearly every advance of position he has obtained; and you are all wrong in supposing that he is indebted to any other influence than mine. *I* made his fortune. [*Goes up.*

Camp. [*Aside to others.*

True, and I rather think he regrets it now; for Olmedo shows him no favour in return; but the patronage of the old Duchess Alberquerque, the mistress of the household, makes the duke independent. I have heard, from those who knew him formerly, that Don Cæsar, to-day our master, was then one of the greatest fools under the moon —a spendthrift, who dissipated his whole patrimony in a few years.

Man.

A youth of folly sometimes makes an age of wisdom.

Bas.

I believe him to be a man of honour and probity.

Camp.

O, credulous Basto! who takes seeming for reality: The private purse of which he has the command annually absorbs six hundred and sixty million ducats. 'T is an obscure little Pactolus reserved for a particular fisherman, but in which I should like to cast a net.

Prie.

You are not wise. Your present talk is, at least, very imprudent. My late grandfather—an experienced courtier—always gave this advice:—"bite the king but kiss the favourite."

Alba. [*At table.*

Gentlemen, gentlemen, let us turn our attention to public affairs.

Camp. [*Aside.*

His private interest he means—his avarice has some new greed. [*All seat themselves at table.*

Ped. [*To Basto, in a low tone.*

I want you to make my nephew an alcade or custodian of the waifs and strays.

Bas.

You promised me to name, ere long, my cousin Melchoir bailie of the Ebro.

Ped.

You will ask me to dower your daughter next—one is perpetually assailed.

Bas.

You shall have your alcade.

Ped.

And you your bailie.

Alba.

Gentlemen of the council, I must call your attention to the fact that all are well provided for, except myself. You have charge of the revenues upon tobacco, Basto. Those upon indigo and musk are yours, my lord marquis de Priego—nice picking for you both. Camporeal receives the imposts upon salt, amber, jet, ivory, and other profitable things. Manuel, why regard me with an unquiet eye? You are well off, I am sure; getting as you do, the duties upon arsenic, ice, lead, and rosewood, and the fines paid by the citizen defaulters for the remission of corporeal punishment. A vast sum—but I have nothing—nothing. Gentlemen give me something.

Camp. [*Aside.*

O, the old cormorant! He has the cleanest profits of all: except the Indies—he has all the islands in both seas; his wide wings stretch from Majorca to Teneriffe.

Alba.

I repeat—I have nothing.

Prie. [*Laughing.*

He has the negroes.

Ped.

I have much more reason to complain. I want the woods and forests.

Alba.

I want something—must have something. Give me the arsenic and you shall have the negroes.

[*All rise and talk at once. Ruy enters at back, observing them.*

Ruy.

My lords! My lords! [*All start.*

O, virtuous statesmen! O, faithful senators, who took an oath to serve your country. Corrupt servants! Traitors! False stewards, who rob your master when asleep! have you no interest in your native land except to pillage, and to fly from her? O, midnight plunderers, breaking ope a grave—your mother's grave—to filch her wedding ring! Gentlemen, for twenty years the wretched people, whom you still would press, groaning beneath a weight of taxes, have sweated full four hundred and some thirty million crowns of gold, to pleasure you in riot, waste, and luxury! Spain totters to destruction, and you seek the means to make her poorer, to enrich yourselves. You, Spaniards, sack your homes as would a foreign foe! Threatened by war, what army can we oppose to the invader? None. Our barefoot soldiers are transformed to robbers who plunder those they should protect. On land starvation, on our seaboard menace; abroad a war, and discontent at home. You count but what you 'll gain; as wreckers, when they see a vessel storm-tossed, laugh with glee at prospect of the booty. Shame upon the parricides who, in the dark, poniard their father! O, ten thousand shames fall upon those great lords who rack their brains to plot the ruin of their native land!

Alba.

This to me! A Santa Cruz! The head of the house of Bazan! who placed him first in office—the ingrate. I 'll be revenged.—I withdraw my support from you—I resign my office. What say you, sir, to that?

Ruy.

That it spares me the pain of your dismissal. You will withdraw, my lord, and in three days leave Madrid, nor return until recalled.

Alba.

Leave Madrid! Exile Santa Cruz! I 'll challenge him—but hold, the heralds are in dispute about his coat of arms—he referred them to me. I 'll send a design with the bar sinister. Ha, ha! I 'll be revenged. [*Exit.*

Ruy.

Gentlemen, you will please retire. In two hours we will resume our labours.

[*Exit all but Ruy. Enter a Page, with letter.*

Page.

A letter for your excellency.

[*Gives letter to Ruy.*

Ruy.

The king's seal.

[*Exit Page.*

"To our trusty and well beloved cousin:—The subject of which we wished to speak, and could not call to mind this morning, was the immediate solemnization of our marriage with the queen. You will see the necessary preparations instantly made. Carlos, Rex."

My dream has reached its climax—the crisis of my fate has come.

[*Enter another Page.*

Page.

Your excellency, the ambassador of France requests an interview.

Ruy.

I cannot see him now.

Page.

The nuncio of the pope awaits your excellency in the hall of audience.

Ruy.

At this hour, it is impossible.

[*Exit Page.*

O, that it should be my task to speed the preparations for her nuptials: my hand must turn the knife already in my heart.

[*Queen enters, through secret panel.*

Queen.

Noble, yet sad—as I have dreamed of him—my heart's ideal.

Ruy.

Great heaven—the queen!

Queen.

Yes, the queen; who for the first time greets the minister.

Ruy. [*Aside.*

For six months I have avoided meeting her; what fate has sent her here—and at this moment too—O, misery!

Queen.

Yes, the queen, who came with purpose to upbraid, but in thy presence asks thy pardon.

Ruy.

Upbraid! Pardon!

Queen.

I can speak to thee without fear; thou art too noble to misunderstand me, or to pass the bound high honour puts between us.— My fate, a sad one—made harsher by restrictions attributed to thee—led me to cherish a fond dream of one unknown, who, shrouded in the mystery true passion only can endure, had sung sad music to my soul—invisible—yet living and beloved. Thou seest.

[*Shows flowers.*

Ruy.

My gift—its shrine her heart—O, joy ineffable!

Queen.

This order, in the same hand, for a moment palled all the heaven of my dream; and in the darker mirror of my soul I saw a tempting, mocking demon, where before had smiled an angel. I thought thy hidden love a snare—a plot—and each restriction but another spur to urge me onward to the toil.

Ruy.

O, heaven! 'T was so you judged of me!

Queen.

A moment only. I sought thee, to upbraid; I came to meet a mere intriguing courtier, and to confound with just reproach his cruelty and baseness; but, when I heard the noble words that, bursting from a great and mighty heart, swept down the towering pride and insolence of Spain's most haughty and rapacious foes—her lords! Nay, when I heard thy voice, and saw thy flashing eyes, that pierced, like shafts of scorn, the breasts of those base peers, I felt that I had wronged thee, and for that I come to ask thy pardon.

Ruy.

Ah, madam, you were there? [*Motions toward panel.*

Queen.

Yes, I was there; unknown to thee, and have heard all: you forgive me?

Ruy.

Forgive thee—I, thy slave—thy worshipper! Ah! heaven, thou knowest how I have shunned this dread temptation; aid me to resist it.

Queen.

I knew not that such grandeur, both of thought and speech, existed until now. You are young, but lately raised to power, and yet you speak like one who might give laws to kings. Whence comes this woman's tenderness of heart—this manly fearlessness of foes?

Ruy.

It springs from love of thee. In serving Spain, I serve the queen. Thy image lends me strength! Strengthened by love, I am all-powerful! I love thee!—hear me out. Thou art another's—a king's—though not his bride, his bride elect. I know it; knowing it, have shunned thy presence, still loving while I shunned it. I have loved thee as the mariner the star that guides him home. A distant homage and an awe-struck worship! Though low to thee as is the earth from heaven, I love thee as the blind may love the light he never hopes to look on! Nay, start not; thou art to me all sacred as saint to votary; as was the muse to poet worshipper in olden times, or nymphid forms, imagined purer e'en than Dian's self, and cloistered deep in ocean's crystal caves.

Queen.

Dare I believe—have I the right to listen?

Ruy.

For six months, although consumed with longing to behold, I have shunned—avoided thee—O with what agony of self repression! but now, I dare to gaze on, worship, and avow my love to thee. I shrink back, lest my shadow should profane. What is your wish? Say to me—die—and I am dead. O, have I offended? Pity—pardon me.

Queen. [*Aside.*

What music have mine ears drunk in? This is indeed the love that poets sing of—that, were I free to answer,

would make life a blessing, earth a paradise; and yet, though mine and living but for me, I must, as he did, shun it like a foe.

Ruy.

Thou dost not speak—O, heaven! I have offended past thy power to pardon.

Queen.

No need of pardon; when no wrong has e'er been done. May heaven have pity on us both, for both are sadly doomed! I will not wrong thy noble nature with a doubt. Thou 'lt not presume, though I confess to thee my queenly life a miserable one. I tried to give my love where duty told me 't would be one day due. It was repulsed. All sense of tenderness was frowned into a formal show of mere politeness. Surrounded but by pulseless beings, who moved and acted but as puppets do; assured affection could not live for me; my sense of life grew dull—and in the shade of cold court-etiquette, my heart seemed withering, and I longed to die.

Ruy.

Alas!

Queen.

To shun despair I gave my soul to dreams; and sought for their indulgence the solitude of lonely walks. In one of these I found, while resting for a moment in the park, a bouquet of the flowers I most loved. I wondered whence they came; but when the offering was renewed I knew that some one cared to please me; and with their fragrances inhaled a sense of ecstasy—a thought that some one loved me.

Ruy.

O, my queen! Kill me not with sense of too much joy.

Queen.

I knew not whom, and scarcely wished to know. My fancy hardly sought to realize his form; my heart was

satisfied to be but loved. At last this letter came — a terror first — a treasure soon. Heaven pardon me — no doubt 't was wrong — but my poor heart so hungered for affection, I could not in my loneliness deny it the deep bliss to feel itself enthroned as queen of some pure soul. Imagination grew more bold and gave a bright ideal to my heart, — which, noble, tender, pure, as I've found thee, I do not shame to own that heart set up as idol, and enshrined.

Ruy.

My queen — O, spare me.

Queen.

Alas! What poverty of payment is this poor acknowledgment to thee, who have so suffered but to solace my sad solitude, who now must suffer more, since now we ne'er again must meet.

Ruy.

Never. 'T is true; the fatal hour is at hand. Well, I accept, without complaint, my destiny. In dreams you 've loved me — what other solace needs my heart?

Queen.

This one — since you so nobly think, and can so nobly act, to know thyself for evermore the idol of my dreams. Adieu.

[*She offers her hand. He is about to take it, but, at sight of the betrothal ring upon her finger, checks himself.*

Nay, take my hand. [*Kneels and takes her hand.*

Ruy.

My queen ——

Queen.

We part forever. Heaven itself may smile on our farewell.

Ruy.

'T is true: pure and enshrined as heaven thou art — farewell forever.

Queen.

Forever, here below, with hope to meet above.

[*Exit the Queen.*

Ruy.

Can it be real? Loved, and by her! 't is so! O! Paradise that opens to my eyes and steeps my soul in love's profound repose: loved — happy — powerful.

[*During this speech Don Salluste, dressed in livery, enters, and sits on table, carelessly watching Ruy.*

Duke Olmedo; Spain at my feet! its honour in my hands — my country's honour! Teach me, O, heaven! how to be worthy of my task; make me worthy to offer her as shield and sword — the queen, my arm; the woman, my devotion. A love most pure, most loyal. My dream is realized — my joy complete — I have no more to fear.

Sal.

Good day.

Ruy.

Great heaven! — I 'm lost — the marquis!

Sal.

It appears that you did n't expect me.

Ruy.

Your lordship has, indeed, taken me by surprise.

[*Aside.*

My evil star again has risen. The angel gone, the demon comes!

Sal.

Well, how goes all with you?

Ruy.

This livery ——

Sal.

O, it procured me an entrance to the palace. I find it much to my taste, and most convenient.

Ruy.

But, you are in danger ——

Sal.

Danger—what an absurd idea!

Ruy.

As an exile, you must be.

Sal.

Do you think that possible?

Ruy.

What, if you should be recognized in the very court, and in open day?

Sal.

Bah! The happy gentlemen in favour at court have no remembrance of one in disgrace; their time is too precious to be wasted; besides, no one ever criticizes the profile of a lacquey. Apropos, what is this I heard talked of just now? Is it true that, influenced by some patriotic mania, you have exiled the grandee, Santa Cruz, through whose influence you first obtained office? That is very ungrateful of you; you forget he is your relation, Don Cæsar. Look at your escutcheon; you will find the quarterings are similar. He 's certainly your relation. Wolf should hunt with wolf. Your eyes, ears, hands should open to him; close to all others. Every one for his own.

Ruy.

My lord, pardon me; but these nobles were guilty, not only of neglect in discharge of their official duties, but of

systematic plunder. The revenues of the State flowed not into the treasury, but into their pockets. A great war pending, they saw Spain without an army and still thought ——

Sal.

There appears to be a draught from yonder window—oblige me by closing it.

[*After a violent effort, Ruy obeys. Music meanwhile.*

Ruy.

As I was saying, your excellency, the safety of Spain can only be ensured by the probity of its ministers. I had flung down the gauntlet, and sent word to the emperor that I should only answer his imperious demands, in the field, at the head of an army.

Sal.

Give me my handkerchief.

[*Same business and music as before.*

You were saying ——

Ruy.

The safety of Spain is in our hands. Let us save the people—let us dare to be just—let us drive selfish intrigue from our councils, and treat as criminals these lordly knaves.

Sal.

My good friend, let us have no more of this nonsense—this patriotic froth: your ministerial cant of virtue, probity, is a stale bait for popularity—a piece of faded tinsel, that is out of date. You are really but a child in these matters. Your globe is but a balloon which we need but pierce with a pin to make collapse; indeed, a good hearty kick would burst it, and let out all the vapourish vanity within.

Ruy.

My lord——

Sal.

I thought I should surprise you; but let us occupy ourselves with more serious and important matters. You will wait my coming to-morrow evening in your palace—the one that I have given you. My project nears accomplishment. Take care that you have no attendants.

Ruy.

My lord, I shall obey. I submit to everything. Do but assure me that the object which you have in view does not affect the safety of the queen.

Sal.

The queen? O—the princess de Neubourg. What makes you think of her?

Ruy.

You are a strange and fearful man. I have an instinct of some dark design which makes my spirit tremble. I feel that you would compel me to commit a crime against the very religion of my heart—for I ——

Sal.

I know it—you love her.

Ruy.

You know it?

Sal.

Yes; but what does that matter? You dream, my master, truly; in seeking to be serious, you only play the buffoon. The goal to which I only know the way is much nearer to your happiness than you can conceive. I lead you. Be content and obey me. I have made a lord of you—'t is a singular transformation—for the moment you have all the semblance of one: but do not forget you are my valet—my lacquey. You are a courtier by mere chance; your true place is behind my carriage. So, pray be reasonable.

Ruy.

O, heaven! of what crime of mine is this the punishment? Do not permit me to be driven to despair. Must

I assist to torture the poor victim of another's hate—perchance the object of my own heart's love. I feel assured his object is but revenge—vengeance on the queen, and am I to aid in that? become to her an object of affright and horror? I shall go mad—my reason leaves me. O, have pity; mercy on her—on me! You know I am a faithful servant—you have confessed it, often. In humbleness I pray—implore for mercy—mercy.

Sal. [*Aside.*

What a fool this fellow is! he will not comprehend. [*To Ruy.*

Let us have an end to this, my master.

You have closed that window badly. I feel still the draught. [*Don Salluste crosses to* R. *and closes window.*

Ruy.

O, this is past endurance! I am the duke of Olmedo, prime minister—all powerful; and I will crush beneath my heel the tyrant that would tread on me.

Sal.

What say you? Pray repeat that speech. Ruy Blas, duke of Olmedo!—quite blind with folly! you forget that upon the count of Bazan was conferred the dukedom of Olmedo.

Ruy.

I will arrest you.

Sal.

And I denounce you.

Ruy.

Me?

Sal.

Yes. I foresaw this, and took care to put your head in equal jeopardy with mine. Ha—ha—you are too quick to play the victor, sir.

Ruy.

I will deny all.

Sal.

Denial will not serve you.

Ruy.

You have no proofs.

Sal.

Thou hast no memory—fool. Hearken sir! and know thyself as much my servant, slave, as is the glove to the hand. If thou obeyest me not, if to-morrow thou dost not have all in readiness as I've directed, at thy house, and meet me there—if thou speakest one word of what has passed between us, to a living being—if thy looks or gestures should imply betrayal, she, for whom thou hast most fear, will, as the object of thy senseless passion, be publicly defamed, disgraced, nay—lost; she shall receive under cover, a paper, which I treasure in a secure place —written—thou shouldst know by whose hand—signed —thou shouldst know with whose name—to this effect:—

[*Hurried music.*

"I, Ruy Blas, servant to his lordship, the marquis of Finlas, do hereby engage, on every occasion, public and private, to render him the obedience of a faithful lacquey."

Ruy.

Enough! I will do your bidding. [*Sinks in chair.*

[*Murmurs heard within.*

Sal.

They come. [*Bowing low and hiding his face.*

My lord duke, command your faithful valet.

[*Lords enter* C. *and advance* R. *Music ceases.*

All.

Duke Olmedo, we tender our resignations.

Ruy. [*Starting to his feet.*

'T 's well! You are no longer needed. Go!

[*Some depart.*

[*To those who remain.*

For you, if you remain, know that my hand must hold the helm and steer the vessel on a different course. You all shall feel that I am master here. [*All bow.*

CURTAIN.

Act Third.

Scene. A Room in the Palace of Ruy Blas. Platform C. at back, accessible by Steps. Stand of Arms on Platform. Ruy Blas discovered.

Ruy.

The night has fallen, and yet he does not come. The base design he has in hand, no doubt, requires the veil of darkness; but that concerns not me; for I shall be no more his instrument. Reflection has brought calm and resolution to my soul. My first unworthy fears I 've found were for myself. I thought but of my own disgrace. He threatened with exposure—death. I can brave both to serve—save her, and my obedience ends when he exacts the slightest service that approaches wrong. Nay, I will arrest him in despite his threats. Let him denounce! His head, as well as mine, shall fall, and she can have no other foe. Did she not buy my life—my heart and soul—in one sweet word, when she said she loved me? They are but held to sacrifice them for her sake. Yet, when she learns I was a mere impostor—will not her heart revolt and loathe itself for having ever changed a thought with mine? But no; unselfish love will joy to perish for her sake, and in her own high-wrought and noble nature she will have an instinct of my truth. Yes; in the sanctuary of her pure breast my memory will thenceforth be shrined, and oft receive a votive tear. Who would not die a thousand deaths for that sweet hope? Yes—yes; all 's well! She 's safe beyond the reach of harm.

[*Enter Queen* R. U. E.

Queen.

Don Cæsar!

Ruy.

Great heaven! The queen—alone—and here—O, fatal snare! Hell triumphs! She is lost—madam ——

Queen.

Wherefore, that fearful cry and start—Don Cæsar?

Ruy.

What brought—who bade you to come here?

Queen.

You.

Ruy.

I—In heaven's name! when?

Queen.

I received from you ——

Ruy.

O, speak! Speak quickly.

Queen.

A letter.

Ruy.

From me!

Queen.

Written certainly by you.

Ruy.

What mystery is this? I wrote no letter ——

Queen.

Read that. *Gives letter.*

Ruy. [*Reads.*

"My queen My heart's queen! a doom of danger hangs o'er my head—thou canst avert the blow, and only thou. Come to me instantly! Without thee, I am lost." —O hell-born plot! I had forgot that letter. Madam—begone!

Queen.

Begone! Don Cæsar! this indignity? Have I been summoned but for this—O, heaven! are you then false? If so, what have I done?

Ruy.

Ay—what indeed! Destroyed thyself!

Queen.

For mercy—how?

Ruy.

I cannot explain—there is no time—fly—hence—begone!

Queen.

I had some fear, and was about to send a messenger——

Ruy.

O, heaven! with every fleeting moment seems to flow a life drop from thy heart—away!

Queen.

Hold, I understand—you do expect, and momently, some dreadful blow, and would spare me the knowledge—I may protect and will remain.

Ruy.

Remain—and here!—

Queen.

The letter was indeed from you! but now the danger you would brave alone——

Ruy.

No—understand——

Queen.

I do—first impulse made you write that letter which your after care for me would fain recall.

Ruy.

I wrote no letter to thee—I am a demon—Fly—O, it is you, poor lady, whom the danger threatens! It is you that hell assails on every side—O! can I find no way to convince you? Think how great my love—to save thee from the snare—the pit of horror to the fatal verge of which thou hast been lured—I would tear my heart from out my breast. O, then believe me that thy presence here imperils both. Go—O, go at once!

Queen.

Don Cæsar ——

Ruy.

Pause not—but fly—Thou wast not seen to enter?

Queen.

Not to be recognized, I think—but seen I was.

Ruy.

O, heaven! by whom?

Queen.

A man, cloaked and masked, stood in the shadow of the portico ——

Ruy.

Masked? Did he not speak? Who was it, can you guess?

[*Enter Don Salluste* R. U. E.

Sal.

'T was I! [*Dropping cloak.*

Ruy.

O, horror! Fly, madam!

Sal.

It is too late; the Princess de Neubourg is no longer queen of Spain.

Queen.

Don Salluste!

Sal.

Forever now the compeer of this man.

Queen.

Gracious heaven! it is a snare indeed—and Don Cæsar——

Ruy.

Alas, madam! thou seest now what thou hast done.

Sal. [*To Queen.*

I hold you in the toils, but, as I am about to speak without anger to your majesty, pray, listen calmly. I have found you—we 'll not noise the matter—alone, with Don Cæsar, in his chamber, at night. This fact proven or admitted will suffice to annul your contract and mock marriage, made by proxy, with the king. That scandal of inquiry may be avoided, sign for me this letter to his majesty I shall have it transmitted by the grand usher to the state chancellor. As for *you*, without is a carriage prepared, in which I have placed a store of gold. Depart—both of you—I shall aid your flight: without being molested you can go by Toledo, and from Alcantara enter Portugal. Go where you please—we will not seek you. Obey in this, and I swear to you that no one, save myself, shall know of this affair: refuse, and all Madrid shall ring with it to-morrow. You have no alternative—you are in my hand. See, madam—your signature to this is all you have to write.

Queen.

I am in his power.

Sal.

I ask nothing but your written admission of the fact, to give the king.

[*To Ruy.*

You see, my friend, how I toil to ensure your happiness.

[*To Queen.*

Your signature.

Queen.

What shall I do——

Sal.

Sign. Do not hesitate. You lose nothing but a loveless crown—you gain heart-happiness, for a joyless throne—a good exchange. All the household are asleep; no one knows of this save our three selves. If you will not sign, you subject yourself to public scandal—infamy—the cloister, and it may be—death.

Queen.

Merciful powers!

Sal.

You are really free—the princess of Neubourg still—your marriage a state fiction; Don Cæsar loves you—he is worthy; to that I pledge my honour. He is of a noble house—almost a prince. He is duke of Olmedo—a Bazan, and grandee of Spain.

Ruy.

Hold!

[*Ruy rushes forward.*

My name is Ruy Blas! I 'm a lacquey!

Queen.

What said he ——

Ruy.

I said my name is Ruy Blas—my station—this man's valet.

[*To Don Salluste.*

You and I make a vile and miserable pair: I have the lacquey's garb—you the lacquey's soul.

Sal.

'T is true. This man is indeed my valet.

[*To Ruy, who goes up* C.

Fall back, and silence, sir.

Queen.

Great heaven! I am punished for my dream.

Sal.

He spoke too soon, and told too much; but, no matter now; my vengeance is sufficiently complete. What think you—is it not? How loudly will the court and city laugh to-morrow! You degraded me—ha! ha!—I dethrone you. You banished—drove me from Madrid; I hunt you from society. You offered me your attendant for a wife; I have given you my lacquey for a lover. Ha—ha—ha! When the king divorces you, you had better wed this valet. Take him to Neubourg and have him made a duke,—that you may still, at least, be a duchess. Ah, you debased and triumphed over me, yet dared to sleep in peace—vain idiot that you were ——

[*Ruy locks door, and then stealthily approaches Don Salluste, and quickly takes his sword.*

Ruy.

Villain! You insult your queen

[*Don Salluste goes towards door.*

No need of that—the door is fast. No one can enter here—nor friend, nor follower—none but the fiend himself—the fiend, who, until now, hath gratified thy every wish; but who, if he would save thee now, must in person come and battle for the prize! 'T is now my turn—my day! I hold thee in a grasp of iron!

[*To Queen.*

Your pardon, madam. This man has no soul—no feeling; nothing human save the form. Yesterday, my torture was his triumph—he trod on me—he mocked and laughed at my despair—he struck me on the heart! He

made me play the menial in the council hall, where, but an hour before, I was dictator. He saw me weep, and smiled: he heard me pray, and sneered: I—I cannot paint his savage triumph.

[*To Don Salluste.*

Fiend! was 't not enough, but you must now insult your queen! Wretch! to thy knees; and kiss the dust before her! But no, approach her not; we crush a serpent when it hisses in our path; and when a coward trickster plots, not merely 'gainst a woman's life, but 'gainst her dearer fame—intrigues to rob his sovereign, not of her diadem alone, but of the chaplet crown which virtue consecrates—to make suspicion's hot breath sear her stainless brow—be he lord or hind, 't is each man's duty, first, to spit upon, and then with dagger, sword—no matter what—destroy! Lord! marquis! duke! Thy lacquey triumphs! In me behold thy executioner!

Sal.

Give me, at least, a sword, and let us meet on equal terms.

Ruy.

On equal terms! Lord marquis, sure you jest! What! A gentleman cross swords with his own valet. Fie! Stoop to fight a duel with a slave! a dog! whom 't was thy privilege to whip; but who, in turn will smite thee—yea, smite thee, marquis, as the shepherd smites the treacherous dog that seeks to wolf the lamb.

Queen.

Have mercy—spare him!

Ruy.

Though an angel for the demon pleads, it is in vain.

Sal.

Assassin!

Ruy.

No! Avenger! There 's no escape—no help—no hope! I greet thee like thy destiny.

[*Queen throws her arms around Ruy, to restrain him.*

Sal.

His eye is terrible.

[*Hurried music. Don Salluste rushes up steps* C., *and seizes a sword from stand of arms on platform above.*

Ha! Ha! we 're equal now!

Ruy.

Not so. Thy crimes weigh thee down, and heaven's wrath is on my sword. 'T is fate decrees my arm thy punishment!

[*Ruy releases himself from the Queen, as he speaks, and follows Don Salluste. They fight and Don Salluste is killed. Queen, overwhelmed, sinks into chair* R. *Ruy covers the body of Don Salluste with cloak.*

Madam, you are saved. Your enemy lies dead.

Queen.

[*Rising, and shrinking back.*

O, heaven!

Ruy.

O, have no fear! I 'll not approach—I dare not. I would but say I 'm not so guilty as you think. Love made me weak—blind—foolish; but not base. Have pity!

Queen.

What would you, sir?

Ruy.

Thy pardon.

Queen.

Never!

Ruy.

Never? Then I 've done with life. [*Drinks poison.*
Sad flame, expire.

Queen.

What said you?

Ruy.

Nothing. My sins now end—nothing. You curse me and I bless you—nothing more.

Queen. [*Troubled.*

Don Cæsar! What have you done—what would you do—you do not speak—your cheek grows pale—I pardon—I believe—I—I love you, Cæsar!

Ruy.

My name is Ruy Blas.

Queen.

Ruy Blas! I pardon thee—I—I love thee, Ruy Blas! —Paler and paler still! Thou diest! I might have saved thee!

Ruy.

No! no! my queen! Had thine avowal bade me live —it could not be! 'T was fated—and so best. Had I indeed been duke, my life were still a curse to thee. The lacquey's love to sadness added shame. Yet I may hope for pardon—blessing thee for thy past love—and pity now. Had I lived, my love had poisoned all thy happiness. I am repaid. You forgive—you love me! 'T is all I lived for, and is worth dying for. Fly—fly, my queen—O, fly, at once! Here, take the key—begone! Thy secret 's safe! The only witness of thy presence here —now dies—dies most happy, in thy arms. My queen! Adieu! [*Music, very low and mournful. Picture.*

CURTAIN.

DON CAESAR DE BAZAN

VOL. III

Preface.

✠

THE French comedy of which this is an adapted translation was written by MM. Dumanois and Dennery, and was first presented at the Porte St. Martin Theatre, in Paris. The original representative of Don Cæsar de Bazan was Frederick Lemaître. "Here," says Lewes ["Actors and the Art of Acting," p. 75], "was the union of grace and tatters, of elegance and low habits. The Spanish nobleman had stained his ermine, and dragged his honour through the wine-shop and the brothel; but he had never wholly lost himself, and had not perverted his original nature. Very shortly you perceived the real nature of the man underneath — the nature stained, not spoiled, by reckless dissipation; and it was, therefore, no surprise when, as the play proceeded, the nobler elements of this nature asserted themselves, and Don Cæsar claimed respect."—The comedy thus brilliantly vitalized in Paris was speedily made known in London, and thence it came to America. The first English translation of it — which, with a few changes, is here reprinted — was made by Gilbert A. A'Beckett and Mark Lemon, and was brought out at the Princess's Theatre, London, on October 8th, 1844 — Don Cæsar being played by James W. Wallack. "The play," said N. P. Willis,—who there saw Wallack's performance, and mentioned it in a subsequent letter ["Life of Wallack," p. 39],—"seems conceived and written especially for this fine actor's peculiar powers. The high-born Spanish gentleman,

in pride and rags, indomitably gay in his worst perils and extremities, and preserving his elegance through all his trials and tatters, could never be represented with more admirable truth and attractiveness. The abandon with which Wallack plays, seemingly carried away by the gaiety of the part, yet always true to nature and to the poet's meaning, gives his performance, to me, a charm irresistible."—This personation of Don Cæsar continued, for many years, to illustrate that airy fancy, sparkling humour, and exquisite grace which were so delightful in the acting of the always honoured and now lamented Veteran. Two other versions of this comedy were produced in London at about the same time with this; one by Dion Boucicault, at the Adelphi; the other by Charles Mathews, entitled "A Match for a King," at the Haymarket. The piece first made its appearance in America, on December 9th, 1844, at Mitchell's Olympic Theatre, New-York. The historic period of "Don Cæsar de Bazan" is the same as that of Victor Hugo's "Ruy Blas." Charles the Second, of Spain—who, in the comedy, is not unlike the popular ideal of Charles the Second, of England, though in fact he was but little better than an idiot—reigned from 1661 to 1700. Neither "Don Cæsar de Bazan" nor "Ruy Blas," however, pretends to rest on a substantial historical basis. In Don Cæsar we encounter a kind of profligate Mercutio—a character towards which the old Spanish writers displayed a pardonable partiality [see, for a hint, Vincent de la Rosa, in chapter 47 of "Don Quixote"], and which steadily finds favour with all who love laughter and can sympathize with intrepid and comic audacity.

W. W.

New-York, November 2d, 1878.

✠

"In truth he was a strange and wayward wight."—BEATTIE.

"When plate was at pawn, and Job at an ebb,
And stomach as empty as brain."—MARVEL.

"Thou dost drink, and dance, and sing,
Happier than the happiest king!"—COWLEY.

"It is the nature of rags to bear a kind of mock resemblance to finery,—there being a sort of fluttering appearance in both, which is not to be distinguished at a distance, in the dark, or by short-sighted eyes."—SWIFT.

"'O, dark-eyed maid,'
The soldier said,
'I've been wounded in many a fray;
But such a dart
As you shoot to my heart
'I never felt till to-day!'"—SYDNEY DOBELL.

"And come he slow, or come he fast,
It is but death who comes at last."—SCOTT.

"There may be better things to do
Than watching the weathercocks for pastime."—R. B. LYTTON.

Noblesse oblige.

✠

Persons Represented.

✠

CHARLES II, *King of Spain.*

DON JOSE DE SANTAREM, *his Favourite, and Prime Minister.*

DON CÆSAR DE BAZAN.

MARQUIS DE ROTUNDO.

JUDGE.

LAZARILLO.

PEDRÓ.

LOPEZ.

FIRST CAVALIER.

SECOND CAVALIER.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

MARITANA, *a Gypsy.*

MARCHIONESS DE ROTUNDO.

LORDS, LADIES, ALGUAZILS, GUARDS, GYPSIES AND ATTENDANTS.

Place and Time.

✠

SCENE.—*Madrid in Spain.*

PERIOD.—*Latter part of the Seventeenth Century.*

TIME OF ACTION.—*Indefinite, but brief.*

DON CÆSAR DE BAZAN.

✣

Act First.

Scene First. MADRID. A PUBLIC PLACE. FOUNTAIN C. WINE-HOUSE L. 3. E. A GROUP OF SINGERS AND DANCERS DISCOVERED.

All.

Maritana! [*Music.*

[*Enter Maritana,* L. U. E., *gaily dressed as a street dancer. The group make way for her. She is following the King, who enters, preceding her, disguised in a cloak, &c.; he regards her attentively. Enter also Don Jose, who follows at a distance, watching them.*

Marit.

A maravedi, sir; only one; ah! I have lost the power of charming coin from purses.

[*The King drops money in her tambourine, and goes out, hastily,* L.

No, no! what, gold! a doubloon! yes, and yet I feared to approach that noble cavalier, he seemed so cross and melancholy.

[*She turns to group, and converses with them as though narrating her good fortune.*

Don J. [*Looking off.*

I was not mistaken—it is the king! Thrice have I found him watching this pretty wench, seemingly spell-bound by her grace and beauty.

Marit.

Yes, friends, it is my birthday: therefore I devote these pieces to mirth and revelry. There! [*Throws money to them.* Away with you! I 'll join you presently.

[*Music. Exeunt*, R. U. E., *all but Maritana and Don Jose.*

Marit. [*Going, pauses.*

A doubloon! neither song nor dance was worth so large a recompense.

Don J.

Your good fortune seems to have made you thoughtful.

Marit.

Signor! O, no, no!

Don J.

A golden piece, was it not? Here is its fellow.

[*Gives money.*

Marit.

For me?

Don J.

Yes, pretty one, for you.

Marit.

Thank you, signor, but ——

Don J.

Well, what fear you?

Marit.

The influence of this glittering tempter. [*Holds up money.* When I was a child, my step was light, and my song the tuneful echo of my merry heart; but now, when the

hopes and fears of womanhood have made both heart and step less buoyant than of old, my reward is greater: should I not fear?

Don J.

I do not understand you.

Marit.

You will not, signor. Think you that I am a woman, and know not that I am fair? Men tell me so by words and looks a hundred times a-day. Think you that I am a woman and love not the incense that is offered to my beauty? or that I seek not to adorn the shrine that claims so many worshippers?

Don J.

Go on. I see no cause for fear.

Marit.

Ah! again you will not. The songstress of the street, the mime who treads the measures for the pleasure of the crowd, knows well the worth men set upon her, signor; she covets gold to free herself from bondage, and grows ambitious of a higher sphere. Each word of praise is as a breath to fan the sleeping flame; each gift is fuel to the growing fire.

Don J. [*Aside.*

The very instrument I need!

Marit.

Have I not cause to fear the end?

Don J.

No.

Marit.

No! when thus I 'm tempted. [*Shows money.*
Haunted as I am by a vague presentiment, a secret hope——

Don J.

Indeed!

Marit.

Yes, yes; since I attracted the gracious notice of the queen, I have thought my ambition no longer criminal.

Don J.

Let me be prophet of your future fortunes; confide in me, and all you desire shall be accomplished.

Marit.

All accomplished?

Don J.

I have the power to make your dreams realities. Your wish shall be the law of nobles.

Marit.

[*Aside and pleasantly excited.*

I cannot breathe.

Don J.

Come! to-morrow shall see you the glory of Madrid.

[*Takes her hand.*

Marit.

No, no!

[*Flourish heard* L. U. E.

Voices. [*Within.*

Long live the queen! Long live the queen!

Marit.

Ah! the queen! I will trust alone to her.

[*Exit* L. U. E.

Don J.

Indeed, fair maiden! I have mastered more difficult intrigues than the conquest of a woman. The king admires this pretty piece of vanity; hem! The mistress of the

king must care for him who raised her to dignity. One obstacle alone presents itself: the humble origin of Maritana. That must be concealed. The queen will learn the wrong she has sustained, and, woman-like, resent it.

[*Goes up.*

O, dare I hope so full a consummation of my wildest dreams?

[*A noise within*, L. U. E., *and cries of "Down with him!"*

What tumult 's this? [*Looks off.*

The followers of Maritana? Ah! she appears amongst them, and by her presence has silenced them. The object of their anger comes this way; what strange fantastic fellow have we here?

[*Enter Don Cæsar* L. U. E., *followed by a crowd, murmuring, and Maritana, who interposes and persuades them to retire. Crowd goes out* L. U. E. *Exit Maritana with them.*

Don C.

The curs! but that it would have disgraced my sword, I 'd have spitted them like larks. That black scoundrel's stiletto would have found a sheath in the noble Don Cæsar de Bazan, but for yon pretty dancing girl. Where have I seen her? Ah! I remember—at Seville, when I pinked a coxcomb who thought that the cherries on her lips were to be plucked gratis.

Don J. [*Aside.*

As I live, 't is Don Cæsar de Bazan; my old college friend at Salamanca.

Don C. [*Feeling in his pockets.*

Not a maravedi! By the aid of the dice box, the rogues have cleaned me out as though they had been noblemen and men of honour. I must now trust to the air and the sky for board and lodging; well, my supper will be light and my room airy.

Don J.

Am I mistaken in addressing you as Don Cæsar de Bazan?

Don C.

Eh! no, signor; what, Don Jose de Santarem?

Don J. [*Giving his hand.*

The same.

Don C. [*Aside.*

His doublet is of three-pile velvet—what can he want with me?

Don J.

When last we met, you were young and prosperous.

Don C.

Ah! you perceive the alteration,

[*Looks at his own dress.*

But I was always fond of change.

Don J.

You inherited a noble name and a princely fortune.

Don C.

True; I 've preserved the one and spent the other. Is my name of any service to you?

Don J.

I thank you, no. I had hoped you would have done great things, Don Cæsar.

Don C.

So I have; if you doubt me, ask my creditors.

Don J.

I thought your father paid your debts when you quitted Salamanca.

Don C.

So he did, worthy soul! so he did; but then, from the force of habit, I acquired new ones.

Don J.

You have paid somewhat dearly for a life of pleasure.

Don C.

Possibly; though I have freed myself now from all anxieties. I 've no money, so I am not teazed by poor relations. I 've no lands, so am without grumbling tenantry. I 've no particular destination, so never take a wrong turning. I 've nothing to support but my sword [*Points to broken scabbard*], and that keeps a sharp look out for itself.

Don J.

Why have you visited Madrid?

Don C. [*Tenderly.*

Madrid! my native city! why have I revisited thee? But for the hope, Don Jose, the sweet, though foolish hope, that I should there find I had lost all, ay, all —— [*Pauses.*

Don J.

Your follies?

Don C.

No, all my creditors; but I was deceived; creditors never die—their number is increased.

Don J.

Indeed! how?

Don C.

Most of them have children; creditors will have children, heirs to their ledgers; and the amount of my debts will mingle with their earliest recollections.

Don J.

What plans have you got for profit?

Don C.

None. [*Shows empty pockets.*
I 've not wherewithal to make stakes with a street beggar.

Don J.

Your enjoyments, then, will be few; for pleasure is costly.

Don C.

Hem! I must content me with what I can get; a brisk quarrel is easily procured; so I will amuse myself with fighting.

Don J.

There, too, fortune is against you.

Don C.

How?

Don J.

The carnival week commences to-day; and the king has issued an edict making it death to engage in a duel.

Don C.

What! death for the thrust of a sword? How human nature has degenerated!

Don J.

Nay, the restriction is but for one week, the carnival week; you will have the rest of the year to enjoy yourself.

Don C.

A whole week! 't is hard for one who has nothing but a hot temper to warm his thin blood; but you who are—by the bye, Don Jose, what are you?

Don J.

I — I am nothing.

Don C.

Nothing! then we are still on an equality.

[*Enter Lazarillo and Pacolo, a water carrier*, L. 2. E.

Pac.

Nay, Signor Lazarillo, do not spurn my good offices; you have been cruelly used, that 's the truth on 't.

Laza.

Thank you, comrade, thank you. Think me not proud or ungrateful; I have but one desire, and that is — to die.

Don C.

To die before your beard grows?

Pac.

Ay, sir, he would drown himself.

Don C.

How! drown? In water? Exchange this bright and lovely earth for muddy water! The thought on 't gives one the ague; at your age to wish for death! you — you can't be plagued by creditors!

Laza.

No, signor; I am an apprentice to the armourer who has in charge the arquebusses of the royal guards.

Don C.

Well, that 's no reason that you should drown yourself.

Laza.

No, signor; but this morning, under the pretext that the arms were neglected, the captain ordered me to receive fifty lashes.

Don C. [*Indignantly.*

Fifty!

Laza.

It was not the number, signor; I do not mind suffering, but one blow is too much to bear.

Don C. [*Crosses to Don Jose* R.

The boy is a true Spaniard; [*Familiarly.*
We—we must speak in his favour, Don Jose.

Laza.

My lieutenant interceded for me, but in vain, signor.

Don C.

Possibly; but he will not refuse the request of such noble advocates as ourselves [*Leaning on Don Jose's shoulder*], Don Jose.

Don J.

Pardon me [*Moving away from Don Cæsar*]; but at present, there are reasons for my non-interference.

Don C.

O, very well! then the boy must be dependent upon my influence alone.

[*Drum within. Exit Pacolo* L. 2. E. *Footsteps heard.*

Laza. [*Looks off* L. U. E.

Ah! I am pursued! I shall be again degraded. [*Going.*

Don C.

Stay! place yourself behind me; we will defend you.

Don J.

We!

Don C.

Yes, Don Cæsar and his sword! [*About to draw.*

Don J.

You forget the royal edict.

Don C.

The ——

[*About to utter an imprecation — removes his hat.*
But it is the carnival week.

[*Drum. March. Enter Captain and Soldiers* L. U. E. *They come down to* L.

Cap.

There is your prisoner, secure him. [*Points to Lazarillo.*

Don C. [*Interfering, humbly.*

One moment, captain; allow me, suffer me, to humbly intercede for this young delinquent.

Cap.

[*To Soldiers, who pause, and not regarding Don Cæsar.*
Soldiers! why do you pause? [*The Soldiers advance.*

Laza.

O, mercy! captain, mercy!

Don C.

You do not hear him, captain; the poor lad sues for mercy. Let me [*Removing hat*] join with him in supplicating pardon.

Cap. [*To Lazarillo.*

Back to your duty, sirrah! I heed neither your tears nor the mouthings of this sottish mummer.

Don C. [*Indignantly.*

What! [*Recollecting himself.*

That cursèd edict! O, if it were not the hanging week! [*Calmly.*

But, captain, if he returns, no blows; see, tears! they are not easily wrung from so brave a heart. Pardon, captain. [*Detains him by the cloak.*

Cap. [*Snatching it away.*

Unhand me!

Don C. [*Indignantly.*

Dare [*Recollecting.*

O, that edict! that cursèd edict!

Don J.

[*Aside to Don Cæsar,* c., *and going up.*

Hard words, Don Cæsar.

Don C. [*To Captain.*

One word more. You are a gentleman and a soldier; so am I; I have pledged my honour to protect this boy, you understand.

Cap.

You have my answer.

Don C.

No: what I solicited in vain, I must now compel.

Cap.

Insolent!

Don C.

Enough. In spite of the royal edict, I must have the *amende*, my noble captain.

Cap.

How?

Don C.

How! with my sword, which will ennoble yours by the contact. I am Don Cæsar de Bazan [*Replacing his hat*]; Count de Garofa, possessing the right to remain covered in the presence of the king. I have sued to you, humbly sued to you, and you have insulted me; and the royal edict —

[*Checks himself and draws sword.*

Cap.

A challenge!

Don C.

Yes, which you will accept, if you have either honour or courage.

Cap.

You shall not doubt it.

[*Captain motions Soldiers to retire; they go off* L. U. E. *Captain retires up. Exit Don Jose.*

Laza.

You fight for me; O, no! I will return, Don Cæsar.

Don C.

You shall, my gallant lad, to your lieutenant, who would have spared you the ignominy of a blow: be patient, and in ten minutes I will make him a captain.

[*Don Cæsar and Captain fight. Populace rush in, murmuring. Captain is wounded and falls. Enter Soldiers and Alguazils. The latter arrest Don Cæsar. Scene changes.*

Scene Second.—A STREET IN MADRID. [FIRST GROOVES.]

[*Enter and cross over the stage the Alguazils and Soldiers, conducting Don Cæsar: Lazarillo follows. Then come Gypsies, &c., singing "Ah, ha, ha, the ragged cavalier." After they have gone out, enter Don Jose* L. I. E.

Don. J.

My plans will soon have a happy consummation; the edict enforced, Don Cæsar's reckless nature will make him the easy means of Maritana's advancement. Ah! here comes the fair enslaver of the king.

[*Enter Maritana* L. I. E.; *she wears a scarf of gaudy colors.*

Marit.

Again the queen has smiled upon me. It is no idle phantasy that fills my brain; some lucky accident may place me at the height of my ambition. [*Sees Don Jose.* Ah! signor.

Don. J.

I would fain know what pleasant thoughts gave birth to such bright smiles, Maritana.

Marit.

The queen, signor, the queen!—You see I have not been a niggard of your gift. [*Shows scarf.*

Don J.

And you think yourself rich in the possession of such a trifle. Confide in me, and ere long the gayest lady of the court shall yield to you in splendour.

Marit.

I dare not listen to you. I dare not trust the longing of my heart.

Don J.

Wherefore ?

Marit.

My roving life has taught me truths beyond the common experience of my years. I have seen the rich man's idol of to-day the outcast of to-morrow. No, no, my destiny is known to me. [*Mournfully.*

Don J.

You do not believe your own prophecies; you may gull the dullards who bribe you to promise fortune, but know yourself the cheat. I will show you my skill in palmistry [*Takes her hand*]: to-morrow you shall be a countess.

Marit. [*Delighted.*

A countess ! [*Pauses.*

A countess but in name.

Don J.

Nay, by right of honourable alliance. You know me not, or you would not doubt my power to realize the hopes I have awakened. You rescued but now a stranger from the extortions of your band.

Marit.

Yes, yes; he saved me from insult, I but repaid the debt I owed him.

Don J.

Though now a ruined spendthrift, he is of noble lineage. He loves you, Maritana.

Marit. [*Appears affected*

Indeed ! signor.

Don J.

I have promised to be his advocate; should you consent to share his name and fortunes, I will restore him to position.

Marit.

Have you the power ?

Don. J.

Don Jose, the favourite minister of Charles of Spain, could do much more.

Marit.

And you are ——

Don J.

Don Jose, commissioned by the queen to raise Maritana to the rank she covets.

Marit.

Indeed! then I have not dreamed; I have not trusted to phantom hopes.

Don J.

Before to-morrow, I will prove their reality.

[*Exeunt* R. I. E. *Clock chimes, and strikes five. Scene changes.*

Scene Third. { MADRID. A PRISON; DOORS R. AND L. CLOCK C. A TABLE AND TWO STOOLS. DON CÆSAR AND LAZARILLO DISCOVERED.

Laza.

Arrested, tried, and condemned, all within an hour; he has but two hours to live!

Don C. [*Looking at clock.*

Two hours more; how the deuce am I to pass my time? I shall die of *ennui.* [*Takes a stool and sits* L. C.

Come hither, lad. [*Lazarillo sits at Don Cæsar's feet.*

If you were in my place, and had a couple of hours before you, how would you employ them?

Laza.

In recalling the errors of my past life.

Don C.

What, in two hours? You must be very ignorant of my biography. Recall my past errors — no, there is no time for that. I 'll make my will; no, that would not consume two minutes.

Laza.

[*Taking his hand and sobbing.*

O, signor! I have been the cause of this; it is for me you are about to die. Is there no service by which I can show my regret, my gratitude?

Don C.

Yes, you can oblige me materially.

Laza.

O, how? say how! [*Clinging to his hand.*

Don C.

By showing a little more regard for my lace ruffle; see how you 've torn it!

Laza.

Alas! Is there no one to entreat your pardon from the king? No one has yet pleaded for you.

Don C.

Nay, boy, all are not so indifferent to my fate. There was one venerable old man who threw himself in the path of the king, regardless of the wheels of the royal carriage, or the hoofs of the royal mules; he stretched forth his trembling hands, while tears bedewed his aged cheeks, and, in accents broken by emotion, he implored "Pardon, pardon, for Don Cæsar!"

Laza.

Ah! it was the old count, your father!

Don C.

No: it was one of my creditors: see how wrong you were.

Laza.

But, of all your noble friends and companions not one has come to visit you.

Don C.

A mark of their good feeling, Lazarillo [*Don Jose enters* R.]; to see me in my present position would be more than they could bear; so out of kindness they keep away.

Don J. [*Coming down* R.

Excepting me.

Don C. [*Rising.*

Don Jose!

[*At a sign from Don Jose, Lazarillo goes out* R.

Don J.

You seem surprised; you wrong me; I was always your friend; and do I not prove my sincerity by coming to you when all is over?

Don C.

If your friendship was to be of any practical service, you might have made your visit a little earlier; but I confess if I had looked for sympathy yours would have been the last I should have expected.

Don J.

I may yet be in time to serve you; you have but two hours to live. [*Clock strikes the quarter.*

Don C.

I beg your pardon [*Looking at clock, which now marks a quarter past five*], it is an hour and three quarters; the error is of no consequence, but we may as well be right when we can, for life is very short.

Don J.

Yours may be long enough to enable us to understand each other. Come: let us sit, I wish to speak with you.

Don C.

With pleasure, for my time is all your own. [*They sit.*

Don J.

Well, then, Don Cæsar ——

Don C.

Well, Don Jose.

Don J.

If I had it in my power to grant any demand, what would be your dying request?

Don C.

My dying request? to live, to be sure.

Don J.

As the king's favourite minister, and as your friend, if you will accept the conditions I am about to propose, I swear to grant whatever you ask, always excepting life—that I cannot promise.

Don C.

It 's awkward, as that happens to be almost the only thing I 'm likely shortly to want.

Don J.

Is there nothing else?

Don C.

Nothing—stay, you saw a boy, did you not, as you entered?

Don J.

The one to whom you owe your present position?

Don C.

Yes: I believe I do owe him that. But, I owe something to everybody. I should not like him to be at the mercy of the world when I am gone; will you assist him?

Don J.

Yes, I will provide for him.

Don C.

That is kind: I will pay you beforehand—with a thousand thanks.

Don J.

Have you nothing else to ask? consider.

Don C.

Hum, no, I think that's all.

Don. J. [*Aside.*

He will never accede to my plan, for such a trifling recompense. [*Aloud.*

Don Cæsar, have you thought of the manner of your death?

Don C.

Yes! I know all [*Rises*]; a rope! would that death came by sword or arquebuss; but a rope! Yes, I think I have one request, Don Jose.

Don J.

Name it. [*Rises.*

Don C.

I would bequeath the gallows to my creditors; but let me be dispatched by the arquebusses of a dozen brave fellows; in short, let me die like a gentleman.

Don J.

You shall have your wish.

Don C.

You will not deceive?

Don J.

I swear it, on the honour of a soldier.

Don. C.

You give me new life; that is to say, you have taken away half the inconvenience of death, if I receive it at the hands of brave men. I should like to drink with the worthy fellows.

Don J.

Drink with them! You, the Count de Bazan?

Don C.

I've drunk in worse company ere this; besides, if I am their superior now, they will soon have the advantage of me. You promised to grant my wish.

Don J.

And I will: a banquet shall be prepared for you, that shall recall the revels of past times. Is that all?

Don C.

Yes, that's all; and now for your conditions: what do you require of me? [*Both sit.*

Don J.

Not much for a man in your position. I simply require you to marry. [*Clock, now at half-past five, strikes again.*

Don C.

Hum! to marry! I don't see the use of that. What can be the good of it for an hour and a half?

Don J.

That is a mystery.

Don C.

A mystery, indeed! It can't be for my fortune, because I have nothing to leave, except my debts and my name. Ah, my name has still some value. I see it all; some woman wishes to be called a countess—is it not so?

Don J.

It may be.

Don C.

Well, she shall have it. It is nothing to me. I want to fill up my time: marriage is an occupation, and one may be as good as another; it's for so short a time, we can't have many matrimonial differences.

Don J.

You agree to confer the title of Countess de Garofa.

Don C.

Together with my interest in the county of Garofa, if you can find I have any remaining. But, by the by, what 's my wife's name? is she young and pretty?

Don J.

You must not ask me.

Don C.

Ah, I understand. I 'll wager my life [*Rises*]—no, by the by, that's not mine—but the lady is at least fifty! No matter!—the bargain 's struck, and I 'll marry with my eyes shut.

Don J.

You need not do that; a thick veil will so effectually shut out your face, that it will be unseen by the lady.

Don C. [*Rises.*

Thank you for your delicate consideration—it will spare me from perceiving the full extent of my sacrifice; and the lady the pain of observing the condition of the bridegroom.

Don J.

Your attire is hardly suitable to a wedding.

Don C.

It is my travelling dress, somewhat frayed and stained: I wear it as the last gift of my tailor.

Don J. [*Rises.*

I have taken care to provide a costume more fitted for the occasion; and in the adjoining apartment you will find all prepared.

Don C.

Do as you please; I am at your disposal. Deck me as gaily as you will; crown me with roses, ere you lead me to the altar; I shall then seem more fitted for the sacrifice.

[*Exit* L. 2. E. *Clock strikes—now at a quarter to six.*

Don J.

Ordinary diplomatists would let that man be hanged, and make no use of him. By superior tact, I shall make him subject to the attainment of my fondest wishes. [*Calls.*

Ho! Pedro! [*Pedro enters* R.

Let a banquet be prepared in this apartment immediately; send Lazarillo to me; the boy in attendance on the prisoner.

[*Exit Pedro* R. 2. E.

At length, my fair Maritana, my prediction is about to be fulfilled; this step will bring you nearer to the king. There

is now no barrier but this ruined spendthrift. The task to win Maritana was more difficult than I anticipated, but the name of the queen at last achieved my triumph.

[*Enter Lazarillo* R. U. E.

Laza.

You sent for me, signor.

Don J.

Yes. Come near me, my good lad. Are your parents living?

Laza.

Alas, sir, no.

Don J.

What friends have you?

Laza.

None—at least but one, and he is condemned to die to-day, and for me—for me.

Don J.

You mean Don Cæsar; he is, indeed, your friend. At his request I have promised to take you at once into my service.

Laza.

At once! O, sir, while Don Cæsar lives, let me tender him my unworthy service.

Don J. [*Aside.*

Faithful boy! he is one that may be trusted. [*Aloud.*

Be it so; to-morrow, then, you will form a part of my household.

Laza.

And to-morrow I shall be devoted to your service as truly as I am to Don Cæsar to-day.

Don J.

Go, then, and send hither the soldiers that Don Cæsar has invited as guests.

[*Chime. Clock strikes six. Lazarillo bows and goes out* R. 2. E.

Don J.

[*Taking some papers from his pocket.*

Hem! a pardon for Don Cæsar. Poor Charles! It is as well that he should do an occasional good action, particularly when his minister has the credit of it. A subject is condemned to death—the king's heart is touched—of course, on the advice of his minister—a pardon is signed, of course dictated by the minister. By—by one of those inexplicable accidents which occur—no one but the minister knows how—the pardon arrives an hour too late. It is a sad affair! Don Cæsar is to be executed at seven—the pardon will arrive at eight; but king and minister will be blessed for the exercise of clemency.

[*Enter Lazarillo* R. U. E.

Laza. [*Announcing.*

The guard, signor.

[*Exit Don Jose* L. *Music. Enter Soldiers.*

Chorus of Soldiers.

[*Banquet table and four stools are brought on by Attendants, during song. The table is richly spread.*

Comrades! when the martial drum
Wakes us from our slumbers,
And leaders cry, "The foe—they come!"
We charge, nor fear their numbers.
For then our path, tho' gory,
Is still the way to glory.
Comrades, who could fear, etc.

Comrades! when the muffled drum
Sounds to mar our gladness,
And tells some mortal's hour is come,
Our hearts are filled with sadness.
Though his death be gory,
It has no ray of glory, etc., etc.

[*Clock at 6.15. At end of song Don Cæsar enters, richly dressed. Re-enter Don Jose.*

Don C.

Well, Don Jose, are velvet and gold thrown away upon me? How do they become me?

Don J.

Famously. See, the banquet is prepared, and the guests are assembled.

Don C.

Ah! wine and gold! The pleasures of my past life seem to be brought back to me! Everything but lovely woman. Woman — that word reminds me of my approaching marriage.

Don J.

True; time wears. In a few minutes I shall have the pleasure of presenting you to your bride. [*Exit* R. U. E.

Don C. [*To Soldiers.*

Now, friends, fall to. [*Glances at clock.*

I am compelled, by an appointment of some moment, to limit our revel. [*They all sit, and fill their glasses.*

Ah! wine! my old and early friend. [*Holding up his glass.*] 'T is long since you and I have met. Pretenders to thy name have often wooed and won me, but thou art the true descendant of the vine. Thy rich breath floats about my nostrils, and tempts me to embrace thee. Now, comrades, fill — each to the brim — and pledge me to the health of the Countess de Bazan!

All.

The Countess de Bazan! [*All rise.*

Don C.

The Countess de Bazan and her happy widowhood.
[*Drinks.*
Music alone should sound the requiem of such a draught. Come; the song!

[*A suitable drinking song is introduced here.*
[*Clock strikes for half-past six. Enter Lopez.*

Lopez. [*Announcing.*

My lord, the judge!

Don C.

Indeed! admit him, by all means. [*Music.*

[*Exit Lopez.—The Judge and four Alguazils enter,* R. *Soldiers rise. Don Cæsar bows to Judge, with great respect.*

Judge. [*Reading from paper.*

Don Cæsar de Bazan. "The king graciously accords to Don Cæsar de Bazan, Count de Garofa, his royal mercy; the Count will not suffer by the hands of the common executioner,—his Majesty having been graciously pleased to command that Don Cæsar shall be led into the barrack yard, and there shot by a detachment of the royal guard."

[*The Judge gives paper to the Officer, and retires solemnly. Don Cæsar offers him wine, which he haughtily declines. All laugh as Judge goes out* R. U. E.

Don C. [*Sitting unconcernedly.*

Now, comrades, we 've just time for the other verse.

[*Another stanza is sung. Clock strikes 6.45. Lazarillo, during the singing, carries off the guns, and returns with them before its close.*

Soldiers.

Don Cæsar de Bazan!

[*All rise and drink. Organ heard.*

Don C. [*Rising.*

My wife! [*To the Soldiers.*

It is the Countess de Bazan.

[*Clock now ten minutes to seven. The Soldiers rise from table. Don Jose enters, leading in Maritana, closely veiled. The Soldiers take their guns, salute Don Jose and Maritana, and go out* R. U. E.

Don J. [*Aside to Don Cæsar.*

Not a word, not a look.

Don C.

A look would be vain indeed! 'T would be a piercing glance that could penetrate that veil.

Don J.

Don Cæsar, your bride waits your hand.

Don C. [*Takes her hand.*

It 's tolerably soft, and gives me some curiosity to know if so small a hand belongs to a wrinkled face.

[*Tries to look through the veil.*

I never saw a woman so muffled, in my life.

[*Don Jose points to clock—aside.*

True, what matter? but ten minutes more.

[*Aloud and gallantly.*

Madam, to you I devote the rest of my existence.

[*Organ music. Don Cæsar leads Maritana out* L. U. E.

Don J. [*To Lazarillo.*

Admit the Marquis de Rotondo and his wife.

[*Exit Don Jose, following Don Cæsar. Enter the Marquis and Marchioness de Rotondo* R. U. E. *The Marquis and Marchioness look about them with an air of amazement; they then meet face to face, and look at each other.*

Marq.

Where on earth can we be?

March.

Is it a prison?

Marq.

A prison! [*Looking round.*

No, it can't be a prison, for this is n't prison fare; a *fricandeau*, or my nose deceives me.

March.

Is it a monastery?

Marq.

Ah! it 's more like a monastery.

[*Taking up a bottle of wine and looking at it.*

Some wine still left! Then it 's not a monastery; your true monk would n't leave enough to drown a thirsty spider.

March.

What place can it be?

Marq.

No matter, dearest, we have done as Don Jose desired us, and that is enough; he told us to get into a carriage, and we did; he said we should be taken somewhere, and we are taken somewhere.

March.

That 's all very well; but why are you the mere puppet of Don Jose? You can do nothing without him; all you possess seems to be at the disposal of Don Jose.

Marq.

Madam, do not despise that sacred sentiment which goes by the euphonious name of gratitude! What were we until we knew Don Jose? I rich, but obscure; you lovely, but unappreciated; my merits were undiscovered,

your beauty nobody could ever see. Was it not Don Jose who got me the appointment of governor general of his majesty's poultry?—aviary, I mean.

[*Clock five minutes to seven.*

March.

What has a marquis to do with hatching turkeys?

Marq.

Marchioness, speak more reverently of incubation. For the honour Don Jose conferred on me, I have sworn to devote myself to the wishes of Don Jose, and to comply with all, however incomprehensible he may appear.

March.

But this blind obedience might affect your honour; it might affect mine.

Marq.

Your honour! Let any one attack your honour, and this good sword, rusting in honourable repose, will leap from its scabbard. Who has assailed my beautiful, my best?

March.

Who would have dared—who would have looked me in the face and spoken of love?

Marq.

Ah! you are ever the best protectress of your beauty. Time treads upon your cheek without leaving a wrinkle; that face can never lose its charms; your beauty 's still the theme of all who share my dinners and my wine; how they have praised your youthful air for the last thirty years! [*Kisses her.*

March.

Fie! some one is coming: now, perhaps, we shall discover where we are.

[*Enter Don Jose, leading Maritana,* L. U. E.

Don J.

I wish you joy, marquis. [*Marquis bows.*
You had better now return to your palace at Saint Fernando, with the Countess de Bazan, your niece.
[*Passes Maritana across to* R. C.

Marq. [*Aside.*

My niece?

March. [*Aside.*

What does all this mean?

[*Clock chimes the hour; then begins to strike seven.*

Don J.

You will return with *your niece*, whom you have not seen for the last *five* years.

Marq.

Five years! yes, I think it rather longer than that. Shall I have the honour of receiving my nephew the count, the lady's husband?

Don J.

The lady's husband is ——

[*Seventh stroke of the bell. Loud volley of musketry outside.*

Marit. [*Starts.*

What 's that?

Don J.

Hum! nothing.
Farewell, Don Cæsar! [*Aside.*

[*Tableau — distant drum and trumpet.*

CURTAIN.

Act Second.

Scene First. MADRID. SUMMER PAVILION IN THE PALACE OF THE MARQUIS DE ROTONDO. MARITANA, SEATED; DON JOSE, STANDING NEAR HER; THE MARQUIS AND MARCHIONESS DE ROTONDO, PAYING ATTENTION TO THEIR VARIOUS GUESTS, DISCOVERED. ALSO, LORDS AND LADIES PROMENADING.

1st Cav. [*To Marquis.*

Upon my honour, marquis, I never saw the marchioness looking so well.

2nd Cav.

And so youthful.

March.

Really, gentlemen, your compliments overpower me.

Marq. [*Aside.*

How unanimous they all are! [*Aloud.*

You must really come and dine with me to-morrow: I want your opinion of some wine of a rare quality, and you show so much taste in other matters, that I should value your opinion very much. Women and wine, you know—a judge of the one is generally a judge of the other.

Don J.

[*Still gazing on Maritana.*

Thoughtful and musing! Ah! that's well!

Marq. [*Going up to him.*

Well, my lord, do you admire the fête? The women are lovely, are they not? By the by, speaking of lovely women, have you seen my marchioness? Your lordship's eyes seem fixed on—hem! my niece.

Don J.

Yes; how well she sustains her new dignity! I really think that you and I have only rectified a little error of destiny, in placing her in the position which is evidently the one for which nature intended her: what is your opinion

Marq.

My opinion is, that your lordship's opinion is my opinion, and that you are perfectly right.

Don J.

Ah, marquis, you are quite a courtier; your tact is unrivalled. How go on his majesty's birds, of which you are the governor?

Marq.

I am proud to say that since I have been at the head of the establishment, the royal birds have reached an unprecedented plumpness.

Don J.

By the by, Don Carlo is seriously ill, and if his appointment should become vacant, pray remind me of it.

Marq.

O, this is too much! Don Carlo, grand master of the royal lap-dogs! O, could I ever aspire to such a dignity —chief of the precious pets! Can I be worthy of such a position?

Don J.

Your peculiar talents design you for the situation.
[*Pointing to Marchioness.*
But, my dear marquis, do you see those two young tall gallants paying attention to that lovely wife of yours? Upon my honour, I think she grows younger every day.
[*He turns away and approaches Maritana.*

Marq.

He, too, is struck with the beauty of my wife; poor young creature, she little knows the havoc she is making with her charms!

Don J. [*To Maritana.*

You seem thoughtful; are you not pleased with the fête? There is all that wealth and taste could bring together; nothing is wanting.

Marit. [*Partly aside.*

Nothing is wanting but one whose absence leaves a void within my heart, and makes me loathe the splendour which surrounds me.

[*A Servant comes down,* c., *and speaks aside to Don Jose.*

Ser.

The person whom your lordship expected has arrived.
[*Goes up.*

Don J.

'T is well. [*Aside to Marquis.*
Get rid of these people at once.

Marq. [*Aside.*

At once! that 's rather unceremonious, but it must be done. [*Aloud.*
Gentlemen, pray lead your partners to the adjoining room; there is something provided there, which I flatter myself will gratify and astonish you. [*Aside.*
Sandwiches and wine!

[*Music. All the Guests go off* L.

It was necessary to get rid of them, as Don Jose desired it; that wine must do it.

[*The Marquis and Marchioness are about to follow Guests, when Don Jose stops them.*

Don J.

The lovely countess had better remain here; will you also oblige me by doing so, my good host?

Marq.

Certainly, it is we that are obliged; I am particularly obliged.

Don J. [*Aside to Maritana.*

This fête shall be complete, even "to his presence whose absence leaves a void, and makes this splendour nothing."

[*Exit, leading Marchioness,* L.

Marit. [*To Marquis.*

Did you hear his lordship's last words? You are the host—'t is you that invite the guests—will it be as Don Jose has promised?

Marq.

I dare say it will. [*Aside.*

I did not hear what Don Jose said, but I think it was my duty nevertheless to echo it.

Marit.

What does all this mean? Why this mystery? This marriage, which I was told was the wish of the queen, my gracious benefactress? If I ask to see the queen, I am told to wait. If I inquire where is the husband to whom I was so mysteriously united—whether he is an exile, whether he is alive, when he will return—I am told to wait; always the same reply. Tell me, marquis, am I deceived? has Don Jose been deceiving me?

Marq.

I hope not; for if he has deceived you, he is capable of deceiving me, and my hopes with regard to the royal lap-dogs would be blighted forever; but have you never seen your husband since you married him?

Marit.

I did not see him then.

Marq.

Your love must have been particularly blind.

Marit.

Not so: it was his generosity that I admired; that [*Enter Don Jose* C.
inspired in me the strongest interest towards him; for my sake he has suffered much, perhaps suffers now. I will demand of Don Jose when shall I see the queen? when shall I see my husband?

Don J. [*Coming down* C.

I am glad I am just in time to answer the question, lady; you shall see your husband to-day.

Marit.

To-day?

Marq. [*Aside to Don Jose.*

Is n't he dead, then, after all?

Don J.

Silence!

Marit.

Surely, count, I must have misunderstood you.

Don J.

Be calm, and listen to what I am about to say.

Marq.

Now I shall hear something—now, then.

[*He is approaching to listen, when Don Jose makes a sign to him to retire; he does so, with an air of disappointment, and goes out* C.

Marit.

You wished us to be alone; now let me hear of my husband.

Don J.

He is at hand. [*The King enters* C. *from* R.

Don J.

He is compelled to keep himself concealed, being in hourly danger from the law; for your sake, and for your sake alone, he has ventured here. [*Crosses up* L.

Marit.

O, we will find him a place of refuge! where is he?

Don J.

Here!

[*The King advances and puts his cloak on chair. Maritana recoils, with an exclamation.*

King.

Lady! Maritana! Do you not recollect me?

Marit. [*Aside.*

He! [*To Don Jose.*

That is not my husband. He to whom I gave my hand was——

Don J. [*Aside.*

Don Cæsar de Bazan—behold him there!

Marit.

No, no! I never felt an interest but for one, and *he*, you told me, was Don Cæsar.

Don J.

I did but deceive you for your good. [*Goes up* C.

Marit.

O, wretchèd Maritana!

King.

Do you not remember, in the public place, one whose eyes followed you wherever you moved; one who, of all the multitude around, was alone charmed by the melancholy of your songs?

Marit.

I remember you, signor. [*Aside.*
For I trembled whilst I sought his bounty.

King.

It was because I loved you; it was because my happiness was centred all in you, that I determined to raise you to the station which you coveted. I resolved that you should share my love and ——

Don J. [*Interrupting.*

But being then proscribed, Don Cæsar could offer you nothing but his name.

King.

But now we meet again under happier influences; give me but one word, one look, to bid me hope for your love, and you shall be my sovereign mistress. I will live for you, yes, for you alone. [*Passionately.*

Don J.

Don Cæsar, remember, some one may overhear.

King.

Lovely Maritana, my return must be unknown, but my danger need not separate me from you; we can be happy, separated from the world. Let us hence together.

Marit.

Together!

King.

A few miles from Madrid there is a retreat, where love may revel in security; thither let us fly.

Don J. [*Looking off.*

You must not delay; the guests will soon grow weary of the dance.

King.

My Maritana, come! Why this ungenerous hesitation?

Marit. [*Aside.*

O, heaven? [*Aloud.*

But to leave thus suddenly, without even saying farewell to the marquis.

Don J. [*Aside.*

The guests are returning. [*Aloud.*

Don Cæsar, the countess is right. It might awaken suspicion if she were to quit the fête thus suddenly. She will follow you.

King.

A carriage will be waiting at the door of yonder garden. Remember, your lover—[*Don Jose looks at him*] *your husband* waits for you.

Don J.

Some one comes! quick, quick, begone!

[*Music. Don Jose takes King's cloak from chair and puts it on him. Lords and Ladies cross from* L. *to* R.

Marit.

O, I am justly punished! how I hate these gauds, purchased, as they must be, by days of misery!

[*Music. The King goes rapidly to* C. *and off* R. *The Marchioness enters, and at a signal from Don Jose, leads out Maritana, who is in tears,* L. C.

Don J.

How every obstacle that stood between me and my desire melts into air!

[*Don Cæsar enters, in the disguise of a monk.*

Don C.

[*Approaching Don Jose with great humility.*

Alms for our monastery, son. [*Don Jose crosses to* L.
So, Don Jose, here I am once more!

[*Throwing off disguise.*

Don J.

You! Don Cæsar! not dead!

Don C.

No! Alive and kicking.

Don J.

Who saved your life?

Don C.

You did, by rescuing me from the gallows.

Don J.

But I saw you led out to execution; I heard the muskets.

Don C.

So did I. [*Aside.*

And here are the bullets extracted in good time from the guns by my faithful Lazarillo.

[*Shows bag containing bullets.*

Yes, here they are, six in number; they 're better in my pocket than in my body. I never expected to receive them with so much satisfaction.

Don J.

But you fell.

Don C.

Of course I did; I could not do less when six gallant soldiers took the trouble to make me their target; I should have wounded their pride if I had made them think they had missed their aim.

Don J.

I have been deceived.

Don C.

And so have I; the illusion was so perfect that I really thought I was dead, and, consequently, all my creditors paid, till I found myself among some of my old companions with a dice-box in my hand and a flagon before me.

Don J.

Who can have betrayed me?

Don C. [*Aside.*

Thank heaven, he does not suspect the dear boy.

[*Sitting, unceremoniously—aloud.*

There seems to be a fête here?

Don J.

There is. You are in danger. Why did you come?

Don C.

I 'll tell you, if you 'll have a little patience. I happened to see a carriage with my own arms upon it, and, on inquiry, I found it belonged to the Countess de Bazan; so here I am. Where 's my wife? for you know I 've not much time to lose, if the sentence of that cursed edict is to be respected.

Don J. [*Aside.*

He is not aware of his pardon. [*Aloud, with dignity.*
Tell me, Don Cæsar, what are your plans?

Don C.

To see my wife; she 's mine, and I may as well take possession; you gave her to me, and I have come to you, therefore, to profit by your benevolence.

Don J. [*Aside.*

Must all my designs be thus o'erthrown? No, it shall not be. [*Enter Marquis* C.

Marq.

My guests are merry fellows, they do nothing but drink to the Countess de Bazan.

Don C.

The deuce they do! the Countess de Bazan! my wife! where is she?

Marq.

I beg pardon, are you Don Cæsar? Are you the gentleman that is—not dead?

Don J. [*Aside to Marquis.*

Not a word, not another word; evince no astonishment at anything you hear or see. Do as I wish.

Marq.

And the lap-dogs?

Don J.

Shall be yours. [*Crosses to Don Cæsar.* — *Aloud.*
Don Cæsar, your rights are sacred, and they shall be respected; your wife, the Countess de Bazan, is here, and shall join you immediately. Wait for her. [*Exit* C.

Don C.

She comes, and I shall see her as I have seen her in my dreams, radiant in youth and beauty.
[*The Marquis is going.*
Stay near me, sir, and support me; I am sure I shall require it; the rapture will be too much for me; that soft, white hand haunts me like a spectre.
[*Enter Don Jose, leading in Marchioness,* C.

Marq. [*To Don Cæsar.*
Don't agitate yourself; be calm. I know what it is to await the coming of a lovely woman. I have a marchioness!

Don J.

[*Looking significantly at Marquis.*
Don Cæsar, behold the Countess de Bazan!
[*Presents Marchioness.*

Don C.

The countess—the devil!

Marq. [*Aside.*
He 's giving him my wife! [*The Marchioness smiles.*
She likes it

Don C.

[*Bows formally.* — *Aside.*
No wonder she wore a veil! sixty, by the mass!

Marq.

He 's struck with her!

Don C. [*To Marquis.*

Will you — will you show me the nearest way to the door?

Don J.

Don Cæsar, the Countess de Bazan is prepared to fulfill all the duties of a wife to him — who has the right to demand them.

Don C.

I trust she will make no sacrifice on my account.
[*To Don Jose.*

You can make out another warrant for my execution; I should prefer it to this. [*To Marquis.*

My good friend, did you ever see such a perfect Gorgon? Frightful, is n't she?

Marq.

Frightful, Don Cæsar? [*Aside.*

The man's troubles have ruined his eyesight.

Don J.

The countess awaits your bidding. She is prepared to share your state and fortunes.

Don C.

Madam, I will not take advantage of the accident of fate, charmed as I must be at the generosity of her who would share the lot of so poor, so dunned, so desperate a libertine as myself.

Don J.

She knew your position when she consented to the union.

Don C.

Did she? Then I will not be outdone in generosity.
[*Crosses* C.

Madam, I will not take you from those to whom you

are endeared by years [*Looks at her*], *long years* of tender association. At your age—I mean—that is—in fact, madam, I free you from every tie; I am no longer a husband. [*To Marquis.*

Did you ever see such infernal wrinkles?

Marq.

Dimples, sir, dimples! [*Aside.*

I shall betray myself—and lose the lap-dogs.

Don C.

Perhaps, madam, at some distant period—some *very* distant period—— No, I can never venture. [*To Marquis.*

As a reasonable man, marquis, I ask you, if, on any consideration in the world, you would call that venerable woman—wife?

Marq.

Hem! [*Aside.*

This is too bad. [*Aloud.*

If you don't like her yourself, you need n't make other people dissatisfied.

[*Marquis crosses at back to Marchioness.*

Don C.

Other people! Is there any foo——pray let me not stand in anybody's way.

Don J.

[*Who has conversed apart with the Marchioness.*

Come, let us end this business; you know, Don Cæsar, that the object of this marriage was your title and not yourself.

Don C.

I am willing to stand by *that* bargain.

Don J.

At your nuptials you had scarcely ten minutes to live.

Don C.

Ah, I was happier then than I am now.

Don J.

The countess does not love you.

Don C.

What wonderful unanimity in man and wife!

Don J.

Your chains may yet be golden ones; your wife is rich, you have nothing.

Don C.

Your estimate of my property is singularly exact.

Don J.

You shall have a pension of six thousand piastres if you quit Madrid forever.

Don C.

Quit Madrid? the city of my birth! the home of my creditors!—the last apostrophe has decided me; I 'll go.

Don J.

You must also renounce all right acquired by your marriage.

Don C.

Forego the bliss of—— [*Peeps at the Marchioness.*
It 's a bargain.

Don J.

Will you sign a paper to that effect?

Don C. [*Hurries to table* L.

Will I? Dictate the terms—the more binding the better.

Don J. [*Dictating*

Don Cæsar, Count de Garofa, engages, on the honour of a gentleman, to quit Madrid forever.

Don C. [*Pauses.*

Forever; my poor creditors!

Don J.

And renounces the Countess de Bazan, his wife.

Don C.

Six thousand piastres for that! I would have sold out for half the money! [*Writes.*
My wife.

Don J.

Never to claim the name of husband.

Don C.

O, never, never!

Don J.

Sign.

Don C.

Don C——

[*A servant enters at back.*

Ser. [*Calls.*

The carriage of the Countess de Bazan.

Don C. [*Pauses.*

Eh!

Don J.

Sign, sign, Don Cæsar!

Ser.

Make way for the Countess de Bazan.

[*Maritana passes at back from* L. *to* R., *attended.*

Don C.

I have been deceived; what do I see?

[*Exit Maritana* R. *Don Cæsar is about to follow, when Don Jose interposes.*

Don J.

Stay, your signature! you have pledged the honour of a gentleman.

Don C. [*Tears the paper.*

I see the trick. There!

Don J.

Don Cæsar, remember you are a condemned criminal; a word from me would be the signal of your death.

Don C.

Ah! at last you throw off the mask; now we understand each other.

Don J.

Flight is still possible. I will aid you, on one condition.

Don C.

No! no more shameful bargains.

Don J.

Be warned! Pursue your wife a single step, and it will lead you to destruction.

Don C.

She is, then, my wife? Give me free passage, or I shall owe the law another life. Away!

[*Pushes him aside, and rushes off* C. *and* R.

Don J.

Ho! guards!

[*Soldiers enter from* L.

Pursue that man; if he resist, fire upon him immediately.

[*Music. Volley of musketry outside. Tableau.*

CURTAIN.

Act Third.

Scene. A CHATEAU IN THE WOODS, NEAR MADRID. A GOTHIC SALOON, FURNISHED. WINDOWS AND BALCONY C. DOORS R. AND L. LAZARILLO DISCOVERED.

Laza.

All is prepared for the arrival of Don Jose. What can be the meaning of these mysterious proceedings? This house so suddenly engaged; this lady for whom he seems to entertain so great a respect? Ah! he is here!

[*Enter Don Jose* L. I. E.

Don J.

Has any one arrived?

Laza.

Yes, my lord, the lady; she is now in that chamber.

Don J.

The servants and horses?

Laza.

Returned instantly to Madrid. Shall I announce your lordship?

Don J.

No. Do you remember the cavalier who addressed me yesterday, near the Escurial?

Laza.

Yes, my lord; was it not the king?

Don J.

Silence! He will be here to-night; he alone must be admitted to this apartment.

Laza.

Should any others present themselves, my lord?

Don J.

Refuse them admittance. If they insist, you have your arquebuss—use it.

Laza.

I will use it, my lord.

Don J.

Go! [*Exit Lazarillo* L. 1. E.

This Don Cæsar, whom I thought dead—how did he escape? His presence at this moment would ruin all. I will delay no longer; to-night shall see my plans accomplished. The king will be here anon, and I have already despatched a message to the queen, apprizing her of her husband's infidelity. She comes to-night to the neighbouring palace of Aranguez; there will I seek her, and urge a suit, which, in revenge, she may accord me.

[*A horn at a distance.*

Ah! the signal of the king.

[*Enter Maritana* R. 1. E.

Marit.

What means that? Ah! the Count de Santarem!

Don J. [*With ceremony.*

I trust that my orders have been punctually obeyed, madam; there is nothing you require?

Marit.

Nothing, nothing, I thank you.

Don J.

Then your bright dreams are realized; you have title, splendour, homage. Did I not prophesy rightly, madam? I have kept every promise.

Marit.

You have, Don Jose; though the Countess de Bazan already regrets the wishes of Maritana.

Don J.

Wherefore? why these tears?

Marit.

O, think me not ungrateful to you and to the queen: but 'midst the splendour which surrounds me, I often sigh for the freedom and happy thoughts of the poor dancing girl.

Don J.

Hush!

[*Enter Lazarillo* L. I. E.

Laza.

He is here, my lord.

Marit.

Who?

Don J.

Your husband, madam.

Marit.

My husband!

[*The King enters* L. I. E. *Don Jose salutes him respectfully, and signs to Lazarillo, and both go out* L. I. E.

King.

At length we are together. [*Aside.*
Maritana! [*Aloud.*

Marit. [*Aside.*

Heaven! how I tremble, even at his voice!

King.

Why do you not answer me? why do you not approach me?

Marit.

Pardon me, my lord, but ——

King.

Your lips are colourless [*Takes her hand*]; your hand is icy as death.

Marit.

[*Withdrawing her hand.*

I—I— [*Aside.*

I cannot speak.

King.

Wherefore this chilling welcome? are you not happy?

Marit. [*Aside.*

Happy! [*Aloud.*

How shall I answer you? Can you wonder at my uneasiness? Our strange marriage, the distance which separates us, the noble and the beggar; I still feel how much you are my superior; I dare not raise my eyes to yours; I—I fear you.

King.

Fear me! [*With hauteur.*

We would know—— [*Pauses.*

O, Maritana, how you wrong me by such feelings! I love you, and would sacrifice all to know my love returned. [*Kisses her hand, which she withdraws.*

Marit.

O!

King.

What? Don Jose told me you waited my coming, with impatience. He has deceived me.

Marit.

Not you alone, my lord; I also have been deceived.

King.

How?

Marit.

By this union. The husband that he assigned me was one proscribed and ruined; but still both brave and noble. His sword was ever the defender of the weak; his voice the advocate of the oppressed; where'er he went mirth followed after. A wanderer like myself, I felt almost his equal. I thought that he would know my heart, and from his memory of the past forgive the errors of the present.

King.

Nor shall you be deceived. Each luxury shall minister to your desires. My love shall be so prodigal, that, in despite of all, you shall return my passion.

[*Attempts to embrace her.*

Marit. [*Recoiling.*

Unhand me, count; unhand me.

King. [*Enraged.*

I understand. You love another, Maritana; your heart, I thought, never beat with passion or desire. I am deceived. For this I've made you what you are! Ingrate! To your chamber, madam; you must learn the duty you owe your lord and husband.

Marit.

I obey you; you have reason for your anger; I obey you, my lord and my master. [*Exit* R. 1. E.

King.

Does she relent? why should I hesitate?

[*Going towards* R.

She may yet be won.

[*A shot heard. Don Cæsar enters, over balcony,* C.

Don C.

That's a villainous way to receive a guest. What the devil have I done to be continually made a target?

[*Lazarillo enters, with an arquebuss in his hand.*

Laza. [*Starts.*

Ah! Don Cæsar! [*Exit Lazarillo* C.

Don C.

Well! [*Sees the King.*

Pardon, signor, I had not the honour of seeing you till this moment.

King.

Why did you enter by that window?

Don C.

Well, signor, because the door was shut!

King.

I am in no humour for jesting: what is your motive?

Don C.

A pardonable one. By the light of the moon, I saw in the next balcony a very pretty woman, and I wished to speak to her.

King.

What, sir?

Don C.

I knocked at the door; the porter refused me admittance: how was I to get in? There was but one opening, and that was this window; I was about to ascend, when whizz came a bullet through my hat. [*Shows hole in hat.*
Sacred hospitality, how you are insulted!

King.

What is your business with this lady?

Don C.

Pardon me, I never violate confidence; I merely wish—to see her—that 's all.

King.

Impertinent! I desire you to quit the room.

Don C.

After the trouble I 've had to get here? Are you ——

King.

The master of this house.

Don C.

The master of this house—hum! this house, where I have seen the Countess de Bazan!

King.

You know her, then?

Don C.

Very slightly; I 've only seen her. But, if she resides here, may I ask your name?

King. [*Haughtily.*
I am ——
[*Pauses, and looks at the door of Maritana's chamber.*
I am Don Cæsar de Bazan. [*The King sits.*

Don C.

Eh! Don Cæsar de Bazan! [*Aside.*

Egad! I excel the Phœnix, for two Don Cæsars have arisen from my ashes.

King.

Now that I have satisfied you, I demand to know your name.

Don C. [*Aside.*

The unblushing rascal!

[*Enter Lazarillo* L. 1. E.

Laza.

[*Whispers aside to Don Cæsar.*

It is the king.

Don C.

Eh, Lazarillo. [*Exit Lazarillo* L. 1. E.

King.

You hesitate, sir.

Don C. [*Aside.*

The king here! I understand all.

King.

My question embarrasses you. I demand an answer.

Don C.

Certainly. If you are Don Cæsar de Bazan [*Seats himself* L. *with dignity, and places his hat on his head*], I am the king of Spain.

King.

What! The king?

Don C.

The—king—of—Spain.

King.

You!

Don C.

[*Tauntingly and pleasantly.*

As surely as you are Don Cæsar de Bazan. Ah! it astonishes you to see majesty unattended, at this hour of the night, at the door of a pretty woman who is not the queen. There 's nothing surprising in it, I assure you. I was out of spirits—kings require relaxation sometimes; but, not a word of this royal folly; though with you, Don Cæsar, I may rest satisfied. You will not betray our secret?

King. [*Aside.*

Insolent! Who can he be?

[*The King rises and removes his hat.*

Don C.

Ha! by the by, I remember Don Cæsar—I know all my subjects—a witty, gallant fellow, somewhat of my own humour. He wounded the captain of our guard, in a duel, in spite of our royal edict. He was shot in the outer court of the barrack. [*Rises and advances to the King.*

Be kind enough to answer me one question.—If you are Don Cæsar, what right have you to be alive? If I were to denounce you, every loyal Spaniard would be ready to pink you. [*Calmly.*

But we will not betray you.

King.

Your majesty forgets ——

Don C.

'T is possible. The keeper of the king's memory has gone hunting with the keeper of the king's conscience. But what has our majesty forgotten?

King.

You forget that Don Cæsar received the pardon of the king.

Don C.

Indeed!

King.

At eight o'clock on the night of his condemnation.

Don C.

His pardon at eight! [*Aside.*
But I was shot at seven. [*Aloud.*
I do remember; we did pardon Don Cæsar—an hour too late. [*Aside.*
Though I don't grumble.

King.

You see it would be useless to denounce me.

Don C.

As useless as for me to retain a title which does not belong to me.

King.

Then you are not the king of Spain?

Don C.

No; [*Don Cæsar uncovers: King puts on hat.*
You suspected as much, I suppose. Am I right?

King.

And you are ——

[*Enter Lazarillo* L. I. E.

Don C.

A man who need not fear to meet a legion of alguazils. I am ——

Laza.

Sire, a private messenger.
[*Kneels and gives letter. Don Cæsar retires.*

King.

What is this? [*Reads.*

Eh! treason! The queen knows of my absence? Is at the palace of Aranguez? My horse, boy; stay. [*Aside to Lazarillo.*

You are attached to Don Jose?

Laza.

Yes, sire.

King.

Keep close watch on that man. Let him be removed; and above all, learn his name. [*Exit* L. 1. E.

Laza.

Don Cæsar, is it you?

Don C.

Yes, me, whom you rescued from a dishonourable death.

Laza.

I had nigh performed the office of executioner myself.

Don C. [*Shows hat.*

True.

Laza.

But I knew not that it was you. I——

Don C.

Psha! could I doubt you, Lazarillo? But tell me, am I to leave this house?

Laza.

Such are my orders.

Don C.

If I refuse—if I resist?

Laza.

Resist! Who will oppose you? I am the servant of Don Cæsar.

Don C.

Good lad! should I ever grow rich ——

Laza.

You will retain me in your service.

Don C.

Service! you shall have a dozen lacqueys to wait on you; but, Lazarillo, there is a lady in this house?

Laza.

Yes.

Don C.

I wish to see her — you must take me to her.

[*Enter Maritana* R. 2. E.

Laza.

She is here, my lord.

Marit.

A stranger!

Don C.

Leave us, Lazarillo. [*Exit Lazarillo* L. 1. E.

Well, madam, we have met at last [*Maritana starts and listens intently; as her recognition of him occurs, she evinces pleasure*] — not without some trouble and danger on my part. I've been hunted by a full pack of alguazils, and fired at by a tolerably good marksman, and all for this interview.

Marit.

That voice! you are ——

Don C.

Your husband, Don Cæsar de Bazan.

Marit.

You.

Don C.

Maritana, I know all. You thought my death was certain; you paused not to acquire the title you coveted even in a prison. When you left the altar, you listened for the sounds that were to bring death to me and liberty to you.

Marit. [*Horror-stricken.*

What say you?

Don C.

Thus did you, to acquire title and a name which you have consigned to infamy.

Marit.

'T is false! I have never wronged my husband's honour, even in thought. [*Tenderly.*

But are you indeed my husband? another has claimed the title of Don Cæsar, and ——

Don C.

Mockery! The king of Spain needs not the influence of so poor a name.

Marit.

The king of Spain!

Don C.

Ay, the king of Spain! Royal wooers seldom sue in vain.

Marit.

Stay; prove to me your right to question, and I will answer all. What proof have you to give that you are not deceiving me—that you are my husband?

Don C.

What proof? My honour.

Marit.

Ah! you spoke to me but once. Do you remember the words you then addressed to me?

Don C.

Perfectly, madam: "To you I devote the rest of my existence."

Marit.

You are my husband; those are the words you uttered!
[*She is advancing—he repels her.*

Don C.

Your pardon, madam; your royal lover brooks no rival.

Marit.

O, Don Cæsar—husband! let not my sufferings be thus repaid. Hear me, and then condemn me if you can. On the day—I—I saved you from the fury of the mob, fate threw me in the way of one who professed an interest in my welfare, and told me he was commissioned by the queen to raise me to the station I coveted. The means proposed were ——

Don C. [*Sarcastically.*

Most honourable.

Marit.

Yes, most honourable; for in marrying you, I believed I wedded one who had professed a regard for me:
[*Tremulously.*

One for whom I had felt a deeper interest than for any other being.

Don C.

Are you deceiving?

Marit.

Are these tears the offspring of deceit?
[*Seizes his hand and kneels.*

O, husband! I have suffered for my pride; but be thou the judge how I have preserved thy honour. And if you find me faithless, kill me.

Don C.

Fearful conditions, Maritana!

Marit.

I dare abide them. O, Don Cæsar! you know not what a thing of power that love has grown, which had its birth almost at the altar. The hours of fear and self-reproach which I have passed have made your image an idol to my heart.

Don C. [*Embracing her.*

I must believe you, Maritana. Don Cæsar, the adventurer, is no more; the Count Garofa will live worthy of his name, since you must share it with him. [*Drum heard.*
Ah! soldiers approach the house.

Marit.

Then fly; save yourself.

Don C.

Fly, when the king is at your chamber door?

Marit.

Fear not for me; go to the queen. She is at Aranguez; tell her that Maritana is in danger. She will rescue me.

Don C.

Not whilst I have a sword to second a stout heart.

Marit. [*Clinging to him.*

I know how much I ask of you, who would rather trust to your own arm than seek succour of a woman. But for my sake—for her who will prove how deeply she adores you—go to the queen.

Don C. [*Kisses her.*

To the queen!

[*Exit Don Cæsar* C.

[*Enter Lazarillo* L. I. E.

Laza.

Madam, the king.

Marit.

What is to be done? Do not leave me, Lazarillo.

Laza.

He will order me to withdraw.

Marit.

True, you must obey him; but at least let me have some protection. [*Takes a dagger from his girdle.*
At the worst, this will free me from his power.

[*The King enters* L. I. E.

King. [*To Lazarillo.*

Where is the stranger that I left here?

Laza.

Gone, sire.

King.

What brought him here?

Laza.

He had escaped from prison, sire.

King.

Leave us.

[*Lazarillo looks at Maritana.*

Marit.

Lazarillo, obey the orders of his majesty.

[*Exit Lazarillo* L. I. E.

King.

Majesty! who has dared to betray me?

Marit.

He that has betrayed you, sire, is the same who counselled you to commit a meanness unworthy of a king.

King.

How, madam?

Marit.

He who has made a mockery of the altar — who brought you to me as my husband, the Count de Bazan.

King.

Maritana, I am the king. My pride has long revolted at the deceit we practised on you. Now that you know me for what I am, listen to me.

Marit.

Leave me, sire, I implore you.

King.

Leave you! you — the only one I have ever truly loved?

Marit.

O, sire! in pity go. Be generous — be merciful.

King.

But one embrace — one.

Marit. [*Draws dagger.*

One step nearer, and I strike.

[*Offers at her own breast.*

King.

What, Maritana, am I so loathsome to you?

Marit.

No, sire; but I am wife of one who must find me worthy of him, or find me no more.

King.

Of whom speak you?

Marit.

Of my husband, Don Cæsar de Bazan.

King.

He is dead.

[*Don Cæsar enters* C.

Don C.

Not yet, sire, thanks to your majesty's gracious pardon.

Marit.

Ha! [*Crosses to him and throws down dagger.*
My husband will protect me.

King.

Your husband!

[*Don Cæsar crosses* L., *locks door and takes out key.*
What have you done, sir?

Don C.

Locked the door, sire, that no one may enter—that no one may hear that to which we alone should listen.

Marit. [*Aside.*

What will be the end of this?

Don C. [*Fiercely.*

If the persecutor of my wife had been a gentleman and soldier like myself, I fear that I should have denied him even the chance of an encounter—I think that at once I should have dispatched him; for in such a case one does not look for reparation, but revenge; you, sire, are my king [*Kneels and presents his sword*], and thus do I disarm my vengeance.

King.

You are speaking, sir, to the king of Spain.

Don C.

To whom else should I speak? We cannot always subdue the will or restrain the hand. I will render both powerless. [*Throws away sword.*

But, reparation must be made. [*Rises.*

King. [*With effort.*

Proceed, sir; your audacity pleases me.

Marit.

Remember, Don Cæsar, it is your king.

Don C.

Yes, it is my king. Sire, this poor, weak woman, against whom such power has combined, has sought the protection of our belovèd queen.

King.

The queen!

Don C.

Yes, sire, I was her messenger to the palace of Aranguez.

King.

Then you have seen the queen?

Don C.

You shall hear, sire. When I arrived at the palace, I was denied admittance: but, regardless of the guns of the sentinels ——

Marit.

Ah! you have been in danger!

Don C.

No; you forget that I am bullet-proof.

King.

Well, well.

Don C.

I climbed the garden wall; under the shadow of some trees, I crept close to a pavilion, whence proceeded two voices—those of a man and a woman. The woman, though greatly moved, spoke proudly; the voice of the man trembled with passionate emotion. I heard this—"Madam, you are deceived—your husband meets his mistress to-night. Some officers of the king shall follow him to a secluded chateau in the forest, and bring you proof of his infidelity."

King.

Who has dared to place a watch upon my actions?

Don C.

The man was Don Jose de Santarem, your favourite minister; the lady was—the queen.

King.

'T is false! if it were true ——

[*Crosses towards door* L. 1. E.

Don C. [*Coolly.*

Your majesty forgets that I have locked the door.

King.

Traitor!

Don C.

I told you, sire, that reparation must be made; do you understand me now? The minister betrays his king; the subject would dishonour his queen.

King.

Don Cæsar, on your allegiance open that door.

Don C.

The wrong you would have inflicted on me, another now practises towards you; yet you cannot leave this room.

[*The King falls in a chair.*

Each moment is an age of agony, and yet you cannot quit this place to satisfy your doubt. All that you made me suffer you are now enduring; and yet you cannot stir but at my will.

King. [*Points to door.*

Don Cæsar, at your peril hesitate a moment longer.

Don C.

This retribution is terrible, is it not?

King.

Take up your sword. [*Rises.*

I am a king no longer; your treason forces me to become your equal. Defend yourself, and save me from becoming an assassin.

Marit.

[*Crosses* C. *and is put back by Don Cæsar.*

O, sire, for heaven's sake!

King.

Take up your sword, or I will strike.

Don C.

You will be too late.

King.

Too late! How?

Don C.

When did a Spanish gentleman hesitate to avenge an insult to his king? Think you I have spared the man who would have made my dishonour the stepping-stone to yours? No, sire, I have struck. Sire, your honour is preserved. It is now your turn to deal with mine.

[*Kneels and points to Maritana.*

King. [*Raises him.*

Rise, Don Cæsar.

[*Drum heard, and cries of "The King! The King!" Don C. unlocks door. Lazarillo and Nobles enter.*

All.

It is the king.

King.

Yes, gentlemen, we have visited Don Cæsar de Bazan, one of our most faithful servants. Don Cæsar de Bazan, we have appointed you governor of Valencia.

Don C.

The government of Granada is vacant, sire.

King.

Why rather Granada than Valencia?

Don C.

Granada is twice the distance from Madrid [*Points to Maritana*], and that doubles the obligation; and besides, there I 've no creditors.

King.

Be it as you wish. We appoint our faithful subject, Don Cæsar de Bazan, governor of Granada.

[*Flourish. Picture.*

CURTAIN.

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